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ABSTRACT

Small town community improvement planning is often subjected to urban type analysis. When concepts applicable to the largest cities are grafted onto small towns, a misunderstanding of small town problems and prospects is often the result. Social ecology offers a framework for understanding what a small town is, how it functions, and what is uniquely important about it. It focuses on four dimensions: (1) social structure; (2) the local economy; (3) influence patterns; and (4) cultural norms. These dimensions are highly interrelated and to understand a small town (population less than 10,000) without coming to grips with them is "impossible, inadequate, and seriously misleading". In this manual the basic elements of social ecology are explored. Chapter II discusses the social structure of a small town--the characteristics and dynamics of grouping small towners according to indicators of status and prestige. Chapter III presents the local economy as an essential analytic component, and Chapter IV explores the patterns of influence--who shapes opinions, where decisions are made, and how government is implemented. Chapter V's discussion of cultural norms involves both the kinds of beliefs and values and the institutions that generate and preserve them. In each chapter a discussion guide lists tasks to assist the reader in applying the concepts toward his own community. The final chapter integrates the four dimensions and discusses their meaning for small town problem solving. (Author/DS)

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The Small Town in America:

A Guide for Study and Community Development

by

Bert E. Swanson
Richard A. Cohen

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The Institute on Man and Science
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INTRODUCTION

This book hopes to provide a useful prespective on the small town in America. Its primary audience is those who live in, work with, and in other ways directly affect the quality of human life which is present there.

Our intent is to step back from the "firing line" of issues and problems which arise in small towns to explore some of the basic conditions which describe and even explain these communities. One basic element is physical--the buildings and patterns of land use, for example. Another is economic: trade, employment, degree of local industrial base, distribution of wealth. A third is governmental--the patterns by which decisions get made and carried out--and a fourth is social, including groups and organizations, shared values, and human relationships.

These basic conditions are an important framework for action. They *must* be understood in that they have such strong potential to assist or to slack action. Just as important, they are subjects for possible change in their own right. A new water system may be no more important to a town than a new system for making decisions. And fixing up walls of the firehall may be no more important to many residents than repairing the vitality of local institutions.

Another key influence of the underlying framework is the great influence it has on the *way* things happen. And the process of dealing with problems and issues, of course, can have just as great effect on residents' happiness as the final decision itself.

In looking at the relationship between the basic elements which define small towns and the actions which residents take to live within them, our Institute is expressing one important premise: the need to better connect the worlds of theory and of practice. In improving small towns--as in so many fields--there is a large gap between those who study problems and those who most directly affect them.

On the one hand we have scholars, students, and other "thinkers" who try to understand what makes the small community "work" as it does. People in this group often use models and abstract representations to better understand what many small towns might have in common. Usually, those who study towns enter from the outside, gather data, and leave to publish in professional journals whose audience is fellow studiers of similar problems. Seldom do findings trickle down and back to those who are studied. When they do, it is rarely with the key question addressed, "Assuming these findings are true, what should they lead you to think and to do?"

On the other hand, we have a number of "doers" who work on small town problems. Some live there--local officials and leaders, volunteers, critics. Others make policies and programs, at county, state, and national levels, which are equally important in changing small town life. The general reaction from members of this group is that academic studies are "impractical." Rarely do actors seek information which would enlighten the steps they take or make more explicit the assumptions they hold.

This book is based on the premise that study and action can best be seen as two sides of the same coin. Studies which are divorced from any mechanism for using them and action programs that go forth in ignorance of vital information are equally deficient.

While not always successful in its quest, The Institute does try to practice this viewpoint of integrating theories and practices. Thus, we work with college and universities (where we give lectures and help shape courses); with government agencies (where we advise on policy questions affecting communities); and with specific small towns (where we serve as on-site partner in the development process).

This book grows out of a number of projects in which we have tried to both understand and to help small towns. In particular, the six efforts summarized below serve as building-blocks for this text.

The Revitalization of Stump Creek

This five-year program concerns the renewal of a small (100 homes) former coal town in northern Appalachia. When the deep mine was closed some 25 years ago, about half the mining families chose to stay. The Institute now works with these people on designing and implementing a comprehensive plan for community renewal. The town residents are themselves the planners, seeking "professional input" as they need it. The Institute's role is to help force out options for renewal in physical, governmental, economic, and social realms--but not to make the decisions about which options to take.

An unusual element in the program is the relationship between The Institute and town residents. As the project began, we arranged for the purchase of the entire community from the rural landlord who had purchased it from the mining company. Over the course of the project, some ownership and decision-making power are being transferred from "outsiders" to "insiders" in a way that keeps these two factors in balance. The Institute's actual investment in Stump Creek has helped us to avoid the sense of a consultant or advisor who could readily leave town if our advice did not work out.

As of this writing, we have rounded the half-way point in the project. Residents are buying their home at costs (thanks to imagination and self-help) of less than $4,000. A new water line is in place and sewerage underway. The town has established a government, a library, a newspaper, and a re-cycling project. None of these was present before the project began.

Dunbar Renewal Feasibility Study

Dunbar, nestled in a valley some 40 miles south of Pittsburgh, is a former industrial town of 1,500 people. It lost much of its economic base and physical sense of vitality in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1973, The Institute began a study of renewal possibilities which centered on the town's underused assets, including an impressive but nearly abandoned array of downtown brick buildings. Probably the biggest problem we faced was the spirit of pessimism which prevailed. Not far behind--and more difficult over the long run--was the sharp gap between most residents and those with low incomes labeled, very negatively, as "reliefers."

As with other projects, we found it not wise to try to sustain interest in a "study" without some action steps taken which led to tangible impacts. Thus, two initial study teams have already become rather permanent institutions--a community development corporation which has purchased a building and is rehabilitating it; and a community center group--which sustains a film, library, and crafts programs. Our on-site director was just named "Citizen of the Year" in Dunbar, an honor never before given to an outsider.

Black Lick Assessment

The State of Pennsylvania announced plans to spend 1.5 million dollars in a demonstration project to renew the small town of Black Lick (pop. 2,000). A planning firm was engaged and a plan developed quite promptly. Many residents, however, were concerned that their voice was not included. Others wondered what was "innovative" about a plan that looked so strongly like the hundreds of master plans completed each year for small communities coast-to-coast.

The Institute was asked to assess the development of the project and suggest what had gone wrong. Our analysis included interviews with a number of residents and a thorough review of all information used in the planning. Our study team spent more days in Black Lick than did the professional planners who did the work in the first place. One of our conclusions was that nothing major had gone "wrong" in the project--that what had resulted was a rather predictable outcome from the work of the traditional consulting approach. What made the results less than acceptable was that the expectations were for something more and something different than traditional planning. The business-as-usual approach was simply unable to meet the changed goals.

The Communities of Tug Hill

The Tug Hill Regional Commission was established by the New York State legislature to develop plans for future development in this remote section of some 100,000 people stretching north from Syracuse and Lake Oneida to just south of the Canadian border. The Commission was concerned that the regional development program contemplated might not adequately reflect the viewpoints and needs of the 100 small towns in the area--over half of which were so small that they had no local government or formal institutions at all.

The Institute was asked to conduct on-site visits to a sample of these communities. In general, we found that the needs as perceived by those within these tiny towns did, in fact, vary greatly from those in the rural areas around them. While many of the differences suggested a greater sense of competing priorities within communities, this was not always the case. Pressure on land from outside sources was found to be much higher outside the villages, for example, than within them.

Whitsett

Governor Milton Shapp dropped in on Whitsett--by helicopter--as part of a mid-seventies election swing of poor towns. Without meaning to do so, the Governor raised expectations dramatically for state aid to this highly depressed former coal town in Pennsylvania, sited just north of the West Virginia border. What he viewed as a fact-finding mission was taken by some residents as a firm pledge to help.

The Institute was asked by state government to conduct a study of Whitsett to see what kinds of renewal efforts might make sense. The backdrop of problems included not only extreme physical decline but an almost complete separation between a lower patch whose inhabitants are White and an upper patch, occupied by Blacks. Through extensive interviews in each Whitsett household and independent observations, we concluded that certain highly focussed events could be undertaken, both to alleviate the greatest problems and to test the basis for cooperation for greater efforts that might follow.

Homewood South

Unlike the other experiences cited, this one was urban. Homewood South is a predominently Black section of Pittsburgh--an area of some 9,000 residents which never fully recovered from the riots of 1968. As with Black Lick, the state committed a sum in excess of one million dollars for redevelopment. When residents and their state legislator complained that progress seemed insufficient from the city agency administering the funds, The Institute was, again, asked to assess the situation and recommend changes.

As with Black Lick, our interviews and analysis persuaded us that the project was not an aberration but rather the result of the typical renewal approach. As with many other instances in eastern cities, the investment of state funds in land acquisition, relocation of residents, and demolition of decaying buildings were insufficient to find a developer willing to put up new buildings in their place. Also, as this process dragged on and out, relations between city hall and the residents of the area deteriorated. By the time we arrived, the greatest need was for a mechanism of communication.

Our experience in these projects has led to a number of propositions about small communities. Many of them are reported in specific documents for each project, for which the reader is invited to request from The Institute. (An appendix to this book gives listings and prices.) More broadly, we have drawn these conclusions which helped to clarify the need for and to shape the content of this publication:

#1: Small towns are not all alike. The axiom, "You've seen one small town, you've seen them all" is nonsense. One reason is that small communities are so clearly influenced by the distinct personalities of the handful of people most active within them. Another is the tremendous variability of small towns in terms of economic base, history, type of resident, form of governance, etc. Still a third reason is that small towns are complex, not simple. At the same time there are patterns of differences. For example, the degree to which communities have been "penetrated" by outside forces seems most important in explaining differences among communities, as elaborated in Chapter One.

#2: Small towns do tend to differ in some key respects from cities and suburbs. There are often opposing views on this subject offered by small town residents and researchers. The former often tend to feel that the small towns remain set apart and distinct--little havens from the fast pace and impersonality of the world beyond. The latter see this belief as myth, not reality, and often believe that small town characteristics have now been submerged by cultural universals.

Our viewpoint--reflected in this book--strikes a middle ground. We do not believe that most small towns are as autonomous or even separable as many small towners feel. Yet, we have seen too many distinctions to find wisdom in the belief that the small town is just one place among many where the mass society is practiced. The tables we have reproduced suggest important kinds of differences between towns and the urbanizing national as a whole. In this respect, small town residents who want to consider the position of their community would do well to compare it not only to national averages but to the total picture for small towns.

#3: The concepts used to both study and assist small towns are often urban in nature and do not fit well to small town realities. In Black Lick, the urban planning concepts created models and approaches virtually unrecognizable by residents. And in many community sudies we have examined to gain insights into our own projects, we have the strongest suspicion that the urbanized eye of the beholder became a filter, not a clear looking-glass.

The use of urban concepts to understand small town life is no more a problem, of course, than the use of the small town to understand cities. Thus, the assumption that an urban neighborhood carries on small town traditions as a small social unit have proven, in the instances we have seen close-up, quite misleading.

#4: While small towns are distinctive places and while they do differ in respects from cities and suburbs, they are far from immune to to key patterns of human behavior. Thus, people in small towns sort themselves out in terms of a status system or "pecking order." They have ways of including and excluding people. And their decision-making tends to cluster around certain patterns. Thus, we look carefully in the book at behavior within small towns. That seems predictable in its configurations--or at least generalizable to several major types or modes.

In addition to these and other propositions about small towns, Institute staff working on community renewal problems have also evolved several interrelated beliefs which help to examine our enthusiasms for the inquiries this book makes. The first is a sense that small towns have every right to attempt to take hold of their own future--staking out directions and goals and working hard to meet them. This course flies directly against much prevailing wisdom. Many who work with small towns feel that the job of the community is to understand the larger forces that affect it and to learn how to adapt to them with minimal disruption. Thus, if developers enter an area, the small town should think about reusing its downtown area for parks or housing, given the inevitability of shopping centers at the edge of town. If the population of the area is growing, they too should prepare for planned growth. It if is receding, the community should brace itself for retrenchment.

In a similar, if more subtle vein, many small towns are advised to join in regionalism, gaining strength in numbers. This can be very useful strategy, especially if the region is seen as a loose federation of small social units. But often, the concept of "region" is used not to preserve small towns but to eliminate them in favor of larger sizes and scales. Regional sewage treatment, consolidated schools, planned annexations--all have a habit of destroying the integrity of the small towns within them.

Why should small towns be encouraged to do futures planning on their own terms? Because, we think, they are vitally important to America's future. This is not to say that small towns should reclaim the countryside. Indeed, nostalgia to the contrary, they never fully owned it. Rather, small towns have a place as an alternative to cities and suburbs. Several recent trends suggest that more and more people feel this way. One is the recently discovered tendency for more people to move to smaller towns--especially if they are too far from cities. Equally important and more broad in scope is the increasingly widespread disillusionment of bigness in American life. More and more people are finding that large size--in terms not only of people but of money, power, technology, and other things--often does not solve problems but rather makes them worse. Time after time, large cities have failed to demonstrate the promised economies of large scales. And with isolated but increasing frequency some exponents of smallness--in business, communities, institutions, technologies, etc.--are showing the potential for impressive economies of very small scales.

We do not mean to say that "Smallness" is always beautiful. Depending on its fit to function, it can be beautiful or ugly. Just as "Bigness."

Lastly, we offer thanks in advance to you, the reader. Our hope is that you will read and react, offering your insights and criticisms. We are hopeing that htis volume will help to initiate a new journey toward understanding the small town in America, one that includes scholars, public officials and those who live in small towns. All of us at The Institute have a great stake in that voyage. It is a trip well worth the making.

Harold S. Williams
President
The Institute on Man and Science
Rensselaerville, New York 12147

June, 1976

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Small Towns and Small Towners

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Community improvement is a major concern among many small town residents. Much energy is spent, and time donated, with at best uneven results. No one really knows how many community improvement programs have gone nowhere. Citizens and professionals have watched innumerable efforts stumble and stagnate, or just miss the target. Many small town betterment programs have been misadventures, well intended but short on achieved objectives and long on unwanted consequences.

Why is this? To start with, the small town is practically an unknown entity. The characteristics which distinguish the small town from other residential communities are relatively unstudied and untested. Students of community improvement planning have all too often applied the same techniques and analysis to small towns that they use in big cities. The idea that difference in size can amount to a difference in kind is rarely considered by many experts. Small town community improvement planning, consequently, is often subjected to urban-type analysis and city-type programs. Concepts applicable to New York City, St. Louis, and Los Angeles are grafted into small towns. The result is often the misunderstanding of small town problems and prospects. What is missing is a framework for understanding what a small town is, how it functions, what is uniquely important about it and how small towners can plan to make their communities better places in which to live and work. That is what this document is all about.

This document has three general purposes:

(1) To provide a conceptual understanding of the components of small town living--what makes a small town a small town;

(2) To understand the differences among small towns--what makes each small town unique;

(3) To integrate the dimensions of small town analysis into an approach for community problem solving--how an understanding of small towns is important in planning for community improvement.

Community activists, public officials, students of small towns, and concerned citizens can use the framework and guidelines presented here to understand the problems, prospects, and planning of small towns.

SMALL TOWN AND POPULATION SIZE

To a resident of New York City, an industrial suburb of 40,000 in Westchester County is a small town. Residents of tiny Appalachian mining patches would consider that same suburb practically a city itself. Out of the 18,517 municipalities and 16,991 townships in the United States, which of them are, for the purposes of analysis, actually small towns? Small communities constitute the vast majority of municipal and township governments in this country (See Table I). As the size of the town decreases, the number of municipal and township governments increase. Yet the proportion of the U.S. population governed by these municipalities and townships decreases significantly despite the number of local governments.

Table I: Number of municipalities and towns by population size

Size in Population	Municipalities Number (1972) Millions	 Pop. (1970) %	Townships Number (1972) Millions	 Pop. (1970) %
Total	18,517	132	16,991	46
100,000 or more	153	43	27	12
50,000-99,999	231	12	67	10
25,000-49,999	453	12	185	14
10,000-24,999	1134	13	621	21
5,000-9,999	1398	8	816	12
2,500-4,999	1911	5	1454	11
1,000-2,499	3573	4	3575	12
under 1,000	9664	3	10,346	9

Source: Adapted from Table 80, Pocket Data Book, 1973, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

The line that distinguishes small towns from other community settings is fuzzy and somewhat arbitrary. There is no well defined boundary line of population size above which a small town is no longer a small town. One means of classification comes from the U.S. Government. The Bureau of the Census provides two population categories that describe small towns. One category groups all communities outside of urbanized areas[1] with populations 2,500 to 10,000. Settlements smaller than 2,500 can be found in a category titled "rural non-farm." Obviously we have made two exclusions. The small suburbs of metropolitan areas are not included in our small town classification, since they are more a product and reflection of the central city of the metropolitan region than independent communities, and are best understood within the larger framework of metropolitan areas. The rural farm population, that is, those people who live on farms, is generally not organized into community or town settings and thus would be an inappropriate topic for this document.

The small town, as distinguished from metropolitan suburbs and dispersed farm families, is therefore any community with a population below 10,000.[2] Whether it is an incorporated municipality or an unincorporated village, a settlement that fits these basic characteristics will be classified for our discussion as a small town, and its residents small towners.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SMALL TOWN AND CITY

The definition of small towns implies more than a difference in size. If the residents of communities under 10,000 were no different than residents of larger cities, then the only necessary consideration for community improvement planning and implementation in small towns would be one of scaling down the programs to fit the size of the community. At a simply descriptive level, Census reports point out a number of differences between small towns and the rest of the country. Here are some indicators which demonstrate some differences:

Occupations: Compared to the national average, small towns have a significantly higher proportion of blue collar workers, and a lower proportion of white collar workers:

Table II: Occupational Group: Employed persons as percent of total employment.

	National	Small Towns	
		Communities 2,500-10,000	Rural Non Farm Communities
White Collar			
Professional Technical	14.8%	13.8%	11.5%
Sales	7.1%	6.8%	5.4%
Clerical	17.9%	14.7%	12.7%
Blue Collar			
Craftsmen Foremen	13.9%	14.3%	17.4%
Operatives	13.7%	15.8%	18.2%

Source: Social and Economic Characteristics. 1970 U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Industries: Small towns are disproportionately high in mining and construction, and low in professional, wholesaling, and retailing.

Table III: Industrial group: employed persons as % of total

		Small Towns	
	National	Communities 2,500-10,000	Rural Non Farm Communities
Professional	2.5%	1.9%	1.6%
Public Administrations	5.5%	5.0%	4.5%
Wholesale Trade	4.1%	3.0%	3.1%
Retail Trade	2.7%	2.2%	1.9%
Insurance and Real Estate	3.3%	2.1%	1.8%
Mining	0.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Construction	6.0%	6.2%	8.4%
Manufacturing	25.9%	25.6%	30.2%
Agriculture	3.7%	2.8%	5.1%

Source: Social and Economic Characteristics, 1970. Bureau of the Census.

Employment: Small town employment is characterized by less year round stability and less labor force participation.

Table IV: Labor force characteristics

		Small Towns	
	National	Communities 2,500-10,000	Rural Non Farm Communities
Median Weeks Worked (Male)	48.8	47.9	40.9
Median Weeks Worked (Female)	9.1	48.4	45.0
% of Males Not Disabled, Between 16 and 65, Not in Labor Force	51.2%	56.1%	57.1%

Source: Social and Economic Characteristics, 1970. Bureau of the Census.

Income: On a number of indicators, small towns income levels are substantially lower than the national average. The poverty of America's small towns is further demonstrated by the substantial number of its poor who are aged or disabled, dependent on Social Security and public assistance for support.

Table V: Income levels

		Small Towns	
	National	Communities 2,500-10,000	Rural Non Farm Communities
Median Family Income	$9590	$8487	$8248
Per Capita Income of All Persons	$3139	$2714	$2530
Median Income of Unrelated Individuals	$2489	$1829	$1815
% Of All Persons Below The Poverty Level	13.7%	16.0%	18.2%
% Of All Households Below The Poverty Level	14.7%	19.0%	18.9%
% Of All Families Below The Poverty Level	10.7%	12.3%	15.0%
% Of Unrelated Individuals Below Poverty Level	37.0%	46.6%	50.9%

Housing: Small town is inferior to that of metropolitan areas. The indicator accepted as a valid comparison is the lack of some or all plumbing facilities.

Table VI: Housing conditions

		Small Towns	
	National	Communities 2,500-10.000	Rural Non Farm Communities
% of Households Lacking Some or All Plumbing Facilities	4.6%	5.7%	11.9%
% of Poverty Households Lacking Some or All Plumbing Facilities	15.0%	17.0%	33.6%

To be sure, small towns are not identical with our image of the average suburban community or the large metropolitan center. By and large, small towns are poorer, contain more blue collar workers, and suffer inferior housing conditions. That does not necessarily mean that small towns are undesirable habitats. They do offer particular lifestyles and residential environments which are alternatives to city living. Small towns may represent slower pace of life, a chance to know your neighbors, a community which one can identify and define, a place where a resident's contribution to the quality of life may be more readily noticed and appreciated. These are some of the aspects of smallness that make a small town desirable, but there are disadvantages too--some small towners can tell about the feelings of isolation, inferiority, and boredom that do occur, or about the conservatism and traditionalism of many small towns, or the lack of diversity and stimulation that are so much a part of city life. These qualities of course may be preferred by those living in small towns. To live in a small town is to accept a challenge: to value what is good about the community, and to try to adjust to those aspects that are bad--a similar challenge that faces the city dweller.

DIFFERENCES AMONG SMALL TOWNS

Just as small towns differ from the rest of the nation, particularly the metropolitan regions, they also differ from each other. Not all small towns are alike. It is common sense that the uniqueness of a New England mill town can not easily be recreated in an Iowa retail service center. Regional characteristics are obviously one basis of difference. The information presented in Tables II through VI also point to some differences among small towns, particularly in housing and education. These are just some of the objective indicators of the quality of life.

Many of the more critical differences among small towns, however, may not be reflected in census categories, but in more "qualitative," unquantifiable aspects of small town life. These other characteristics, no less important than census data, can be used to further describe and catagorize small towns. Placing small towns into descriptive categories is always somewhat crude--no community can be freely characterized by a label. But there are some fundamental characteristics not shared by all small towns which help to distinguish "types" of communities.

GROWTH AND DECLINE

One measure of difference among small towns is growth and decline. Though the majority of communities located outside the metropolitan sphere have suffered population losses, not all have. In any region, even in the most depressed areas, small towns have a history of population growth and decline that reflects, though not infallibly, the economic fortunes of the communities. Community prosperity is quite frequently seen in population gains, while economic downturns induce residents to pick up their belongings and look for better opportunities elsewhere. There have been instances where population increases only further overburdened already strained private resources and public services, resulting in a deteriorating quality of life. In general, however, the direction of population has been a reliable indicator of community prosperity--so much so that the consistent population decreases of most major central city areas during recent years can be taken to signify the decreasing prosperity of the metropolitan core.

Of course, there are examples of small towns that have not grown or declined very much over the years, but have maintained an even keel, holding population rather steady. These communities would appear to be "stable," a third type in addition to "growing" and "declining." But stable communities that do not replace aging physical structures, add new young families to take the places of the elderly, and in general continually "renew" themselves may ultimately find stability to be tantamount to stagnation. A small town that recognizes the necessity of dynamic change and acts accordingly may be stable in terms of the number of residents but is actually keeping up with the other growing small towns of the nation.

To classify small towns as either growing or declining, it is probably wise to look at two indicators:

(1) Has the town's population kept pace and/or surpassed the rate of national population growth?

(2) Have local per capita incomes increased at rates comparable with the rest of the nation (even though in absolute terms, small town income levels are lower)?

Positive answers to these questions would place the community in the "growth" category. It is probably true that the proportion of small towns experiencing growth and relative prosperity will not constitute a majority of all small towns.

PENETRATION OR AUTONOMY

Another distinction among small communities is the degree to which they have been integrated into the mainstream of American society. This country, for all the diversity it contains, is predominatly urban in character, to the extent that some interpret U.S. history through the growth of and expansion of cities.[3] Despite the heterogeneity of lifestyles, even within communities, overall urban patterns have dominated and begun to displace rural lifestyles.[4] Still, every community demonstrates both urban and rural traits,[5] the many combinations of which make it a difficult and probably inaccurate exercise to label one small town "urban" and another "rural."

Warren suggests that as a alternative to such labeling, a more accurate measure is "community autonomy." He divides small towns based on how much control and impact a community exercises over its own affairs.[6] In terms of the economy, local patterns of power and influence, values and beliefs, and even the social structure, a community could be very autonomous in local affairs, or alternatively dominated by external elements. Certainly no small town is totally isolated and self sufficient, but some may be much more dependent on external controls than others. The terms that can be used to describe these two different small town types are:

(1) "Pentrated":These communities are subject to the provision of many fundamental services, and decisions of the outside world. The resulting lack of autonomy makes these communities prone to fluctuating with the ups and downs of the rest of the country.

(2) "Unpenetrated": These communities have maintained a substantial measure of local control and the impact on the dimensions of community life are relatively fewer than penetrated small towns. The autonomy of these communities can both contribute to internally directed community improvement or, in other circumstances, enable the rest of the country to leave these towns behind.

There are a number of related characteristics. These include the division of labor (the penetrated community is likely to be more specialized), population composition (the unpenetrated community is probably more homogenenous) rate of change (the penetrated community probably experiences more rapid and more widespread changes), and others. But for the most part these lack "hard" indicators. Although the operational principle is penetration, the best indicator is probably one of residential mobility. American society is characterized by a propensity to move--few people stay in the same house for very long. Almost one out of five Americans moves every five years, though half of these moves occur within the same county. A "penetrated" community will reflect this mobility. The residents of a relatively unpenetrated small town will tend to "stay put" longer than the penetrated community. Two indicators of penetration might therefore be:

(1) What proportion of community residents were born in the same county of current residence? Seventy percent (close to the national average) or less would signal the existence of a penetrated community, while seventy-five percent or more implies a greater resistance to penetration.

(2) What percentage of the town's population has always lived in the same house? Six percent or below fits the penetrated model (close to the national average); the unpenetrated community would therefore be characterized by seven percent or more.

Stability, not of absolute population levels, but of a core of residents remaining loyal to their home communities and states, appears to be the most accurate predictor of an unpenetrated community.

Having identified growth and penetration (and their opposites) as processes that are to be found in modern small towns, it is now possible to combine these characteristics to form a typology of small town social environments (see Figure I).

Figure I: Typology of small towns

	Degree of Outside Influence	
Indicator of Prosperity	Penetrated	Unpenetrated
Growth	"Absorbed"	"Self-Reliant"
Decline	"Abused"	"Ignored"

ABSORBED COMMUNITIES: These are the communities that have benefitted most by connecting with the mainstream of American life. They have lured externally owned businesses to invest in the town, and tolerated outside agencies assuming many municipal and community functions that other types of communities might have zealously protected. They are so functionally interrelated with the outside world that they might be characterized as having been absorbed by the rest of society. Absorbed communities of this sort may benefit from sharing the nation's prosperity, but do so at a cost: decisions made outside the community may determine the town's growth or decline; fluctuations in national economic conditions reverberate through the absorbed community. Prosperity absorption implies a lack of meaningful community control and self-direction.

ABUSED COMMUNITIES: Like the previous type of small town, these are also dependent and connected to the outside world. But unlike the absorbed community, penetration here has meant decline and deterioration. These towns have in a sense been abused by the outside world as they have either suffered from exploitation by those outside the community, or have been used as dumping grounds for the unpleasant, difficult problems of the external world. Many a welfare-dominated community, declining due to the overabundance of non-productive residents, and penetrated by the strictures of the welfare bureaucracy and norms, would fit this mold.

SELF-RELIANT COMMUNITIES: The values, conditions, and problems of the outside world have not fully permeated all small towns, yet some have prospered anyway. A number of communities have resisted penetration, managing to build ways of life that fit their particular conditions, providing jobs, services, and amenities that meet the needs and foster a higher quality of life for the residents. Their successful resistance to the subtle and pervasive encroachment of the larger society makes these communities somewhat self-reliant, though complete self determination is impossible in an interdependent, modern world.

IGNORED COMMUNITIES: Finally, there are those towns that society seems to have left behind, not only deprived of the benefits of national prosperity, but actually overlooked and ignored. That is not to say that they are unaware that worlds other than their own exist, but that they survive day to day without such support and benefit from being a part of American society. What support they do receive only tends to create an illusion of being included in the mainstream, when in fact these are token gestures that only reinforce the ignored community's social isolation. Without the resources and conditions necessary to sustain the progress of a self-reliant community, the ignored small town watches as more talented and capable residents move to better settings, leaving the less mobile, less adaptable residents to make do as best they can. Residents there are paralyzed by an apparent lack of options, yet are offered no solace or assistance by neighboring towns and other governmental units. To the extent that they have been ignored up to this time, they have also been "written off" as beyond hope.

DIMENSIONS OF THE SMALL TOWN SETTING

The processes of growth and penetration impact on communities to make small towns quite different places to reside. One of the important rationales for trying to dig deeper and understand what makes a small town "tick" is the fact that not all small towns are alike--and the differences are not merely attributable to absolute size or regional location.

In planning for community improvement, recognition of what makes a town unique is critically important, in fact, absolutely necessary. Since all small towns are not alike, then the techniques and programs of community improvement must be adapted to those differences. To do otherwise, to plan without really understanding the relatively unique combination of characteristics of each town, to transplant notions generated in one community to another without at least a minimum of modification to fit the needs, problems, and potentials of the particular setting--to act without analysis is to lay the groundwork for causing serious disruption and damage, or at least failing to achieve intended objectives.

The approach presented here focusses on four dimensions of a small town that together constitute the component parts of a community--

(1) Social structure: The differentiating of people, families, and groups and the ways they interact;

(2) The local economy: The production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services to the residents of the town;

(3) Influence patterns: The mechanisms of decision-making, opinion-shaping, and mobilizing that shape how things get done;

(4) Cultural norms: The values, beliefs, and attitudes that guide people's everday actions.

In a metropolitan area, the complexity of size and numbers results in a fragmentation of functions, a division of power, roles, and responsibilities so that there is a likelihood of many disconnections between the dimensions of a community. The interests and actions of residents associated with each of the dimensions tend to conflict, as demonstrated, for example, by the multiplicity of groups interacting on the distribution of land uses in the community--business and industrial leaders (from the local economy), governmental officials and agencies (patterns of influence), and homeowners and other residential families (whose interests are best understood from the perspectives of the social structure and cultural norms).

In a small town, these dimensions are much more parallel--those who are at the top of the social structure in terms of status and prestige are likely to wield disproportionate influence in community decision-making, control economic resources, and see their values permeate and dominate their town. To put it another way, the four dimensions of small towns, unlike big cities, are highly integrated and interrelated, like parts of the human body. To understand a small town, however, without coming to grips with its social structure, local economy, influence patterns, and cultural norms is impossible, inadequate, and seriously misleading. To attempt to generalize about all four dimensions from an impression of one of them is deficient, no better than the blind man who thinks he can describe an elephant from a knowledge of the animal's trunk. It is not enough to merely describe one dimension and hypothesize about the others--an understanding of all four, not only as distinct elements of the town, but in the ways they interrelate, reinforce, and contradict each other is necessary for a comprehensive view of the way the small town works.

How do the dynamics of these small town dimensions work? A study by Presthus[8] of power structures in two small towns in New York State demonstrates the interactions of these dimensions. In both communities, a major issue was the construction of new hospitals. In both towns, the push for new hospitals was led by the social and political leaders of the communities. If they were not the same people, economic and political dominants cooperated quite closely. Voluntary hospital drives were initiated, directed by the town's upper echelons, requiring the manipulation of civic values to support such philanthropism. Presthus reinforces his argument with the observations of other researchers, that "the people who dominated hospital building programs were neither farmers, social workers, nor doctors. They were the people who knew about the wealth of the community and, for the most part, possessed it.'"[9] Values, economics, power, and social position all combined to explain different approaches to securing improved hosptial facilities in these two small towns.

SOCIAL ECOLOGY

The keys to this study for understanding small towns are the four dimensions and the way these dimensions are connected and interrelated. This approach is best characterized, we feel, by the term social ecology. The ecology of a town in a sense is much like the ecology of nature where most everything is interrelated and interdependent. Changes in any one dimension will be felt in the other dimensions of the town, just as an alteration of some aspect of the natural environment brings about adaptations and changes in other plant and animal life. We must be cautious not to draw the parallel with nature too far. Where the interactions of plants and animals are instinctive and unconscious, the interactions of the dimensions of the small town are tempered by the fact that they are the creation of men. They are the social dynamics of people, and are thus amenable to self-conscious, rational changes that only humans can do to their environment. In other words, unlike plants and animals, people can remake their ecological settings according to their consciously felt desires and needs--thus, a social ecology of small towns.

The social ecology approach, therefore, involves the interactions of the four dimensions of small towns and their openness to change through community planning. Explicitly or implicitly, other analyses of small town community improvement have touched on some or all of the four dimensions presented here. In fact, wherever possible, our approach is drawn from the experience and understanding of other professionals in the field. Yet, none have defined the small town in quite this way, neither in descriptions and analyses of the proposed dimensions, nor in the understandings of their dynamics and interrelations. In each dimension, the social ecology approach differs:

(1) Social Strucure: The term "ecology" includes dynamics and change, processes that are rarely confronted in a direct way by most analysts and activists in small town improvement planning. Most of the conventional approaches accept community social stratification as static, and suggest it be deemphasized because it keeps residents "conscious"[10] of the existence of inequalities among classes in the town. In fact, the conventional tech-

nique assumes that change in social structure is just about impossible, too conflictual, and thus it would be advisable to "use...the existing set-up"[11] and form alliances with the top social layers in the town. Bruyn reports that after all the activity and movement in one very well known small town development effort, "the main class structure continued unchanged."[12] In the social ecology approach, the dynamics of the small town social structure must not be ignored and may undergo modification when development projects are undertaken. The social structure, as with any other dimension of the community, is a topic for analysis and understanding by both interested citizens and community change agents. If discussion of social structure reveals the existence of tensions, cleavages, and conflicts, citizens must face up to that reality and understand what can be done to alleviate tensions and accommodate differences--avoiding the issue by resorting to the lowest common denominator of nonthreatening topics generally indicates that many community improvement efforts are likely to accomplish marginal unsubstantial change that fails to address the fundamental problems of the town.

(2) The Local Economy: The conventional approach rarely comes to grips with the dynamics of a small town economy that fully explain the community's prosperity or lack of it. Instead, conventional economic analysis begins with the unchallenged assumption that the mandate is growth, economic growth. The answer always seems to focus on more jobs, more business, more industry, to the extent that all community decline can be explained by examining the growth potential of the local economy. From social ecology, we learn that economics does not determine all aspects of a town's quality of life. To be sure, it would be foolhardy to undertake community improvement in other sectors, such as housing, etc. without consideration of the impact of

economic conditions. But the automatic response of many to begin designating industrial areas and luring commercial investors may not address the case at hand, and in fact may ignore real economic realities. Those realities are the crux of the local economy dimension in our approach and must be viewed in the context of who would benefit from economic development, who would bear the burden of the costs of growth and call into question whether it is all necessary anyway.

(3) Influence Patterns: The traditional approach in community improvement planning is to identify those residents who hold official positions of power to convince them of the usefulness of the proposed improvement program, and to get them to agree to implement it.[13] Those with the traditional approach rarely spell out the connections between those who are influential in local decision-making and actions with the other dimensions of the community.[14] Finally, almost never does analysis of local decision-making include an analysis of how power is being used; that is, beyond making decisions and providing municipal services, is power being used to exploit, coerce, and generally abuse those residents without power. Here, we propose to describe informal as well as formal patterns of influence, identify the resources that constitute important bases for exercising power, and to see how power is used to change or solidify existing conditions.

(4) Cultural norms: Here, other approaches to small town analysis rely on values that are primarily the expression of the social, political, and economic leaders or dominants. Biddle and Biddle, for example, caution not to overidentify with the town's disadvantaged, so as to preserve one's objectivity.[15] Community development, according to the Biddles, should focus on stimulating advances without altering the existing class structure.

That is tantamount to a value, which says that community change should ignore, and, indeed, preserve the present social stratification of the town. Conflicting social groups, they say, should be allowed the cathartic[16] effect of an emotional release of their frustrations, so that all participants can then return the other objectives of community development. How values arise, how they are perpetuated, and how they change is of relatively little concern to conventional analysts, since their definitions of community improvement accepts existing values as unalterable. We have found that it may very well be that particular values of a community provide the key for understanding the lack of progress and change in many small towns. Where many community development analysts assume that value concensus should be strived for, the social ecology of small towns reveals that harmonious values may provide little impetus for change. On the other hand, discord and diversity in community values might shake things up enough to make local improvement efforts possible.

Why such a different approach? Why have the conventional approaches failed to go beyong static, descriptive levels of analysis? What are the fundamental beliefs of traditional community improvement planners and small town analysts? Some characteristics of the conventional techniques explain the basis of some of the differences:

(a) Many of the traditionalists in small town analysis and community development have focussed on rural[17] communities and farm areas, without recognizing that many small towns are actually quite urban or suburban in many respects.

(b) Surprisingly, however, a large number of practitioners and academics assume that basically the same techniques of community development that are used in a big city can be applied to small towns, with some modification for size or scale.[18] Our understanding of the literature of small towns tells us that there are significant differences in culture, economy, politics and social structure that make the small town and the city two quite distinct residential environments.

(c) There is not a strong belief evidenced in the traditional small town community improvement literature that shows an awareness of the significant differences among small town settings. Sanders, one of the popularly cited social scientists using traditional conceptiions of community development states, "communities develop according to a cumulative, unidimensional sequence...which holds for communities of all sizes and in all cultures."[19] This concept of only one road to community improvement contradicts our experience with the diversity of small towns, some of which have declined and want to revitalize, some that are already quite vital but want to preserve their desirable state of affairs, some that want to adopt more of the characteristics and amenities of a city life, and some that want to ensure their continued existence as small towns.

(d) Sanders also suggests that communities in the process of planned improvements strive for better integration and participation in the national social structure,[20] that is, they want to be penetrated by the external world's values, economy, and social structure. Penetration is a price for some kinds of community change that many towns do not want to pay.

HOW TO LOOK AT THE SMALL TOWN

The social ecology approach assumes that small town community development is not necessarily rural, nor is it easily fitted into urban analysis. Nor do all small towns want to be absorbed into the mainstream of American society. Nor do they automatically want to be isolated backwoods settlements. An analysis of what small towns are and what they want to be depends on identifying the four dimensions of the small town and understanding how these dimensions interrelate. That requires some in-the-field investigation of a small town.

However, not all small towners are interested in understanding what makes their town "tick." The tasks involved in analysis, the time it takes, even the motivations for making the special effort are not common to everybody. But some small towners are among those who might discover some utility in this document. One group of readers is motivated by a specific civic problem, something that needs a decision and action by the community, but perhaps beyond being resolved by a "pat" solution. Other readers are not as oriented to one issue as they are to a whole host of small town problems, and are anxious to understand the interrelations of those problems in the context of the community at large. Besides these two sets of issue-oriented small towners, others who might read this are just interested, concerned citizens, desiring better insights into the inner workings of their town, in order to understand, participate, and act more responsibly in civic affairs. Finally, considering the dearth of literature on small town analysis, students, both in high school and college, who want to learn more about the dynamics of small towns, may find this study helpful.

How is this document to be used? In the following sections, the basic elements of a small town's social ecology are presented and described. Chapter II is a discussion of the small town social structure, the characteristics and dynamics of grouping small towners according to indicators of status and prestige. Chapter III presents the local economy as an essential analytical component of the small town. The pattern of influence--who shapes opinions, where decisions are made, how the business of government is implemented--is the topic of Chapter IV. Chapter V, the last of the four dimensions, cultural norms, is described, in terms of both the kinds of values and beliefs that are found in small towns, and the community institutions that generate and preserve them.

Each chapter begins with a discussion of the basic concepts of each dimension, and found in social science literature. References to other sources for further reading on the concepts are noted in the text by footnotes. It is not enough to merely describe these concepts, The way the dimension works, that is, the dynamic role of the dimension in the small town follows the presentation of concepts. To take and apply a conceptual understanding of a dimension is no easy task. Therefore, we provide in each chapter a discussion guide for the reader to measure his town against the concepts of the dimension. In-the-field research and data collection is required--the discussion guide helps the reader organize and interpret the information about his own town, but it is up to the reader to provide the data.

In all the dimensions, the discussion guide suggests tasks that generate indicators of the dimension. The term "indicator" denotes a piece of data, perhaps some statistics, perhaps only a recorded observation, that may shed light on the dimension, but does not definitely characterize it. An indicator only indicates something, subject to interpretation, and cannot be mistaken for the final answer.[21] The indicators included here are both quantitative and qualitative, that is, statistics provide a useful grounding for analysis, but are inadequate unless combined with benchmarks of non-qualifiable small town phenomena which are equally as important.

Small towners are as well suited as just about anyone, experts included, to apply these indicators to their communities. The quantitative data provide the basis for measuring and comparing the impact and operationization of the particular dimensions in the town. The small towner has an advantage in dealing with the qualitative data. The resident is a daily participant in and contributor to these dimensions--he is an integral part of the community. With the assistance of the conceptual framework and discussion guide, the resident's regular interactions in the social arena, rarely understood or analyzed in the past, become the non-quantitative information that is best gathered by individuals whose data base comes from more than mere observation, but from action. As Greer points out, an individual's understanding of the dynamics of a social situation, or a small town's social ecology in this case, is "...increased by playing a part in the game."[22]

Proceeding through all the discussion guides for each dimension, the reader accomplishes a very significant objective--finding a way to describe and understand the dimensions of the town's social ecology. In other words, the setting for community improvement planning and problem solving begins to take shape. But how do problems fit into the context of social ecology. Chapter VI takes up the integration of the four dimensions and their meaning for small town problem solving. Problems as they are normally addressed in small towns actually reverberate through all the dimensions of the community. The conventional approach of treating the problem as an isolated "sore" in the town may gloss over its connection to deeper conditions, but in time many of these sores will reappear as festering wounds, where attention to the problem's relationship to the town's social ecology may be necessary and unavoidable.

This does not mean that all small towns are at that level of problem solving. On the contrary, most undoubtedly exist from day to day without going much deeper than textbook solutions and minimum maintenance, if they even go that far. However, most small towners pay the price in the end, if the continued decline of small towns all over America is any indication. In fact, we believe the nation as a whole will pay a heavy price if the small towns are ignored. A more comprehensive and critical approach to the problem solving is what is needed to get at the root, not just manifestations, of the problem. Smallness does not automatically imply simplicity--the complexity of small town planning is mirrored in the contradictions, paradoxes, and dilemmas facing small towners. Though a universal formula does not exist, a means of conceiving the resolution of small town paradoxes is broached in Chapter VI.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Urbanized areas are generally synonymous with Standard Metropolitan Statistical Regions (SMSRs), characterized by the presence of a central (or from cities) city of 50,000 or more and surrounding territory.

[2] Gibbs and Davis also use the 10,000 person threshold to distinguish these communities from metropolitan America. In Dennis Poplin, Communities (MacMillan Co., 1972), p. 41.

[3] Arthur M. Schlesinger, "A Panoramic View: The City in American History,: in Paul Kramer and F.L. Holborn, eds., The City in American Life (Capricorn Books, 1970), pp. 13-36.

[4] William J. Gore, "An Overview of Social Science Perspectives Toward the Small Community,: in William J. Gore and Leroy C. Hodapp, eds., Change In The Small Community (Friendship Press, 1967), pp. 16-17.

[5] Poplin, Communities, p. 30.

[6] Roland Warren, The Community In America (Rand McNally & Company, 1963), p. 16.

[7] W.N. Form, "The Place of Social Structure in the Determination of Land Use," in Murray Stewart, ed., The City (Penguin Books, 1972), pp. 256-257.

[8] Robert Presthus, Men At The Top (Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 83-86.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Irwin T. Sanders, Making Good Communities Better (University of Kentucky Press, 1950, 1953), p. 74.

[11] Ibid., p. 13.

[12] Severyn T. Bruyn, Communities in Action (College and University Press, 1963), p. 122.

[13] Bruyn, Communities in Action, pp. 98-100. Cf. Bruyn's description of community development efforts in Southern Illinois, indicated by the working class and unemployed, but reoriented toward control by upper status groups and municipal officials after the intervention of a professional change agent.

[14] Again, Bruyn's description of several case studies reveals that economic development was always a top priority of community influentuals who saw growth as benefitting their interests, op. cit., pp. 120-121.

[15] William W. Biddle and Loureide J. Biddle, The Community Development Process (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 112.

[16] Ibid., p. 104.

[17] J. Carrol Bottum, "The Philosophy and Process of Community Development," in George Brinkman, ed., The Development of Rural America (University of Kansas Press, 1974), pp. 3-14.

[18] Irwin T. Sanders, "The Concept of Community Development," in Lee T. Cary, ed., Community Development Process (University of Missouri Press, 1970), p. 29. Also William W. Biddle and Loureide J. Biddle, Encouraging Community Development (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, Inc., 1958), p. 52.

[19] Sanders, "Concept," pp. 29-30.

[20] Ibid., pp. 29-30

[21] Cf. Albert Biderman, "Social Indicators and Goals," in Raymond A. Bauer, ed., Social Indicators (MIT Press, 1966), pp. 80-82.

[22] Scott Greer, The Logic of Social Inquiry (Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), p. 167.

The Social Structure of the Small Town

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION

A basic tenet of the American society is stated in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal...that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Yet around us we see inequalities, the rich and the poor, those who are well housed in comfortable neighborhoods and those who live in shacks or slums, those with secure jobs and people who have become accustomed to unemployment or receive public assistance. Though we may all be born with an equal chance, differences quickly emerge, and in the end all do not benefit equally in the opportunities of this country. The hard reality is that the cards are stacked against some groups and individuals, that the belief in equal opportunity is not always borne out by the facts. Differences in education, income, occupational prestige, and other characteristics lead to social distinctions that shape the options and opportunities which each individual faces, regardless of the promise of the Declaration of Independence.

References to inequalities are echoed in our everyday language. "upper class," "lower class," and most frequently "middle class" are common descriptions applied to people encountered at work and around town. To deal with the variations within categories, "middle class" is divided into the "upper-middle" and "lower middle,: and so on, reflecting the complexity of social groupings throughout American society. Other terms such as "blue collar," "working class," or white collar, indicate the social inequalities tied to the division of labor. Differences also show up in life styles--who lives in the good neighborhoods, who owns the largest, most spacious homes, who drives the fancier, more showy cars. For some people, the terminology of social inequalities is an abstraction, an intellectural method for sorting and classifying people. For others, social inequalities are part of reality, and the language of these inequalities become guideposts and cues for behavior. The inequalities in job, income, education, social prestige, and location of residence are the components of what is called the "social structure:" "the overall pattern or network of social relationships that recur among a designated set of persons,"[1] in this case, the set being the residents of the small town.

STRATIFICATION AND DIFFERENTIATION

At the base of a small town's social structure is the concept of stratification. By stratification, we mean the ranking of individuals or groups acc0rding to some measure of prestige or status. In other words, stratification is the "layering" of groups of people, much like the layers of rock strata in geologic formations, with some groups placed above others. A highly differentiated community is one where there are many diverse types of social groups. A highly stratified community is one where the social groups, regardless of their numbers, are clearly and undeniably ranked one above the other; a less stratified community would be characterized by a lesser emphasis on layering the town's social groups. Only a totally egalitarian society would be without stratification. The small town, despite "classless," that is built on the inequality of citizens.

Other terminology used here is not all that distinct. To avoid minute arguments, "status sets," "social groups," and other terms all identify clusters of differentiated residents.

Why bother about a town's social stratification? There are a couple of reasons, neither of which will be unanimously endorsed by all observers, but cannot be totally rejected either. First, social structure may be the real key to not only an analysis of a community's social ecology, but also the town's prospects and future course of change and development. What happens in a highly stratified small town, with sharp divisions between upper and lower classes, may be more conflictful than a less stratified community when the issue of community improvement arises. A highly differentiated town might engender a much greater dialogue, less concensus, and more of a variety of ideas for community betterment than the town with little social diversity. Although it tends to resemble the "chicken and egg" controversy, some social scientists go so far as to suggest that social structure is the primary generator of the character of cultural norms and local patterns of influence, concluding that a knowledge of class relations tells you just about all you need to know about community change.

The second important feature of a small town's social structure is related to the size of the community. In a small town, unlike a larger city, most residents tend to know each other by sight, and in many cases more intimately. One aspect of the personalized interactions of small town living is that most people believe they have a fairly accurate sense of the social status of the other residents. There are occasions where a high degree of convergance will occur, and residents will discover that their perceptions of who is upper class, middle class, and such are relatively similar. For example, the banker in town might be generally considered upper class, and the reliefers lower, whereas in a city social rankings might be more anonymous. Perceptions of social status frequently become the basis for interpersonal relations among small towners. This broad agreement on social status sometimes breaks down upon deeper probing. A few pointed questions might reveal that one resident ranks people by income levels, another checks job positions, and a third looks at lifestyles as cues of social status. Occasionally, the perspectives of different classes do not always agree. The upper strata, for example, might perceive minute differences among their peers, but then lump all other residents into one or two broad categories, while lower status groups might simply classify everyone above them as "rich." These distinctions in perspectives, and the beliefs, behavior, and actions that result from them, are components of what makes a town's social structure.

THEORIES OF CLASS AND STATUS

Most of the early understandings of social structure did not begin with the town as a unit of analysis, but from the perspective of a whole society or nation. Substantial insights were drawn from European theorists, particularly Karl Marx and Max Weber. These two nineteenth century thinkers contributed some fundamental concepts that in modified form have persisted to this day. Marx's insights into the economic processes of Europe's period of industrialization and growth were matched by a very comprehensive analysis of social structure. The common use of the concept of class goes back to his definition. According to class analyses, the individual's position in the system of production and distribution of goods or commodities determined one's position in the class structure. Everything else about the individual--his wealth, property, and other material conditions--stemmed from his location in the production system.[2] Though he described several types of groups, in the end, there were really only two classes: those who owned the means of production and those who worked for them.[3]

Weber, on the other hand, while accepting Marx's notion of class, grounded firmly in economics, he added two other non-economic concepts: (1) "status," to indicate social honor or prestige, and (2) "party," representing social or legal power.[4] That is, class, status, and party combined to influence one's social behavior. A person with high status, party and class positions would be likely to associate with people perceived to be of the same social rank. The ideas of Marx and Weber have strongly influenced the approaches to social stratification being used in understanding American communities today.

SMALL TOWN STRATIFICATION

These ideas and others on social stratification have taken hold in the United States and stimulated some people to question the reality of the American belief in equality, particularly as it appeared on the local or community level. During the twenties and thirties, Warner, an anthropologist, was one of many who began looking at community class structures. In studies of two communities, "Jonesville" (population 6,000) and in "Yankee City" (population 17,000), Warner discovered that residents were quite well aware of a system of ranking their neighbors according to criteria more varied than prose used by Marx and Weber. According to Warner, "...while occupation and wealth could and did contribute greatly to the rank-status of an individual, they were but two of many factors which decided a man's ranking in the whole community."[5] When he asked the residents to describe and rank people in the community according to the way they percieved them he discovered six levels of classes.

(1) Upper-upper: the local social "aristocrats," members of families with long histories of wealth and social standing, who tended to stay within their own circles;

(2) Lower-upper: another wealthy group, in some individual cases, even wealthier than members of the upper-upper class, but lacking the properly distinguished backgrounds necessary for belonging to the higher group;

(3) Upper-middle: mostly businessmen and professionals;

(4) Lower-middle: "white collar" clerks and small businessmen;

(5) Upper-lower: workingmen and small tradesmen;

(6) Lower-lower: those associated with lower incomes and poverty lifestyles, usually residing in the less desirable parts of town.

Warner contended that these six "classes" were commonly recognized and used by community residents. Yet as informants, he relied largely on the wealthier residents whose distinctions rested mostly on characteristics of lifestyle, behavior, and possessions--culminating in six distinct social classes. Lower income people perceived only two classes--those that had money and those that did not.[7] But Warner's methodology overlooked their input into the description of classes in Jonesville and Yankee City. This is a problem of many social scientists and government officials. They tend to draw their impressions of community issues mostly from the middle and upper classes, while ignoring what the lower classes have to say. A more reliable way to gauge social status distinctions is to avoid becoming too fixed to the perspectives of any particular group or the criteria of any one standard of measurement. As Vidich and Bensman[8] discovered in their study of "Springdale" (population 2,500), no one standard of stratification is sufficient; rather there are many different criteria that can be utilized to identify social status rankings in small communities.

Reissman used the term "class" to refer to many different bases of social stratification.[9] Having compiled the results of many small town community studies into one hypothetical community, "Hometown," Reissman believes that classes as they are defined by the objective criteria of income and wealth on a national level are real and important in small towns. Friendships and social activities seem to occur within narrow class boundaries, with little interaction beyond that necessary for day-to-day survival occurring among class groups. For some people in town, there is a sense that it is a matter of "my class (or people like me) and all those other people." The larger the gulf between classes, the less the members of each class appreciate the diversity within the other classes. One symbol of class is found in the choice or residential location such as living "up on the hill" or high status part of town in contrast to the lower class area being referred to as "the other side of the tracks." Just as neighborhoods are relatively clearly defined, so is the different behavior of each class. The middle class, frequently the largest of all, tends to be characterized by residents as hard working, clean living, and very involved in civic affairs. The lower class receives the stereotype, most frequently unjustified by the facts, of being lazy, shiftless, and immoral. Little recognition is given to the fact that many poorer people in small towns strenuously try to emulate the lifestyles and values of the middle class. The upper classes tend to remain socially distant and aloof from the daily affairs of the town, their "snobbery" inhibits their involvement with the other classes. Local politics is usually left to the civic-minded middle class, except when an issue that might strongly affect the interests of the upper class who are known to dominate decision-making. Reissman believes, based on the conclusions of a number of studies, that the first response of small towners to the idea of stratification--"we don't have classes here" or "everyone's just plain folks"--is just a veil hiding an active and generally agreed upon class structure.

MEASURING SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Most contemporary social scientists have devised measurements that take into account several factors important in gauging social status. Among the factors that have been used to study American communities are occupation, education, source of income, house type, location of residence, income, and many many more.[10] The most common approach is to use the concept socio-economic status commonly referred to as S.E.S. This is a measure of three factors: occupation, income, and education. By classifying the residents of a town according to these factors, one can identify the kind and degree of social stratification in the community. There are those who say that income is so closely related to the ability to earn a good education and qualify for a good job that it is not necessary to look any further than income as a measurement of social status. Yet that is not always the case, as improvements in one's job and/or education do not necessarily mean an increase in income.[11] For example, the highly educated teacher does not earn as much as or little more than the less educated. The use of S.E.S. should help discover the gulf between the top and bottom of the local social structure, and the point or points at which most residents are clustered.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Small towners do not go about systimatically measuring the social stratification in their everyday lives by using the S.E.S. concepts of social scientists. Instead they are more likely to focus on status as expressed in behavior, lifestyles, and attitudes. One concrete expression of stratification that small towners quickly perceive is the differences between residential neighborhhods. Where it is possible to hide many other manifestations of wealth and status, one's social position is far less "anonymous"[12] in the choice of neighborhood. People choose residential locations based on preferences that reflect their positions in the social structure. Assuming that social structure is mirrored in the use of land, it becomes apparent that land uses are not random, but conform to definable patterns. The clustering of social groups, the characteristics of particular neighborhoods, the location of one neighborhood or land use to another--these are the physical expressions of social stratification in a community.

Social scientists have for many decades examined the similarities and differences within and among communities according to land use patterns. Studies conducted at the University of Chicago in the 1920s, under the direction of Park and Burgess, developed into an approach known as "human ecology." Though developed initially to explain patterns of human settlement in the city of Chicago, some of the effects that the human ecologists described are demonstrably important in small communities, though one should be careful not to assume that what helps describe and explain is necessarily applicable in rural villages and towns.

Human ecologists believe that the growth and development of human communities was comparable to those of plants and animals. That is, like plants and animals, humans tended to settle and use various areas through continuous natural processes. Just as different species of plants are distributed in different areas across a landscape, people and their activities are located at different points throughout a community.

In Chicago, Park and Burgess found that the shape of the community took the form of concentric rings, each ring comprising a generally common function and character, differing from the content and function of the other rings. Due to the ecological parallel, the rings are referred to as "natural areas." The concentric pattern, as they described it, is characterized by a core or center for business and commercial uses, and succeeding rings formed by increasingly less intensive land uses, until reaching the outer rings, other communities seem to have other kinds of developments. Hoyt, for example, proposed a different process of sorting out land uses, reflected in an axial or sectoral pattern of community land uses. Rather than forming rings, activities and land uses divide themselves into wedge-shaped quadrants, usually located along radial highway routes that slice the town. One of these wedge-shaped quadrants or sectors might be a residential area, while another might be commercial, etc. Both the sectoral and concentric patterns focus on one central business district. McKenzie, and later Harris and Ullman, discovered that communities are not always limited to one business core district. In some communities, a number of highly specialized and intensive centers of land use can be found, rather than one centrally located core. As opposed to the concentric or sectoral patterns, the "multiple nuclei" or "polynucleated" schemes represents a picture of a more fragmented, less uniform community land use pattern. Many smaller communities do not even develop the differentiation of uses or diversity of residential areas that are characterized by one of these complex schemes but as they grow in size they tend to develop one or the other of these patterns. In those small towns that remain small, land use patterns are merely a division between one side of the community and the other, sometimes a railroad track, sometimes a stream as dividing line separating residential areas.

The ecological approach has its critics. Bernard for example, notes that most natural areas are not all that internally homogeneous.[13] The closer one looks, differences and variations become apparent in just about any area identified as natural according to the ecological method. In a totally residential neighborhhod, closer inspection reveals sharply different lifestyles, incomes, and values, despite the common location and housing type. An area identified for its unique character, such as its uniformly ethnic population or particular social purpose, will yeild a number of internal variations. To ensure some sort of common functional definition, either the nature of the land use must be defined very generally so that many variations can be embraced in the same category, or the area or unit of analysis must be so small as to ensure that all residents of the location will conform to the particular characteristic that makes it an ecologically natural area.

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY FORM

Lynch's approach to community land use is in some ways a variation on the ecological theme. Like the approach of Park and Burgess, his method requires getting out into the community and observing, absorbing, and interpreting the community. He stresses elements of form--what elements of the community's use of land stand out as important features in our daily activities in the community. Residents use these features as guideposts for orienting themselves in the community, turning the town from a maze of streets and houses into a pattern of meaningful components. As a professional planner, he organizes the community into five categories:

(1) Paths: "...the channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves;"[14] ranging from major thoroughfares to backyard alleys, the sense of movement is a primary tool of many people for orienting themselves in a community;

(2) Edges: "...boundaries...linear breaks in continuity...barriers, more or less penetrable, which close off one region from another... or...seams, lines along which two regions are related and joined together..."[15]

(3) Districts: areas of the community "...which have some common character...,"[16] perceivable both from the inside (as a resident of the "district" from its surrounding environs);

(4) Nodes: cores or concentrations of activity and purpose, ranging from major areas of converging "paths" to important focusses of activity and identify in "districts"[17] (such as a location commonly used for several gatherings, such as a popular store, bar, street corner, enclosed park, etc.);

(5) Landmarks: "...a rather simply defined physical object..." that is "unique" and "memorable,"[18] "easily identifiable" or functionally prominent that is significant to community residents.

Whole towns or just neighborhoods can be viewed through this framework.

One can relate these geographic expressions to social stratification. Different social groups are bound to have differing perceptions of a community's paths, nodes, districts, and edges. Though on the surface these categories appear physical, what distinguishes a path from any other road, or a landmark from any other building, or an edge from any other boundary, is its social meaning and social use. Different social groups are likely, for example, to identify edges in very different manners--in many cases, according to where they feel comfortable and accepted and where they feel excluded or resented. Lynch's own studies of American cities are themselves somewhat biased in favor of the perspectives of the middle classes. Care must be taken to explicitly recognize and understand the social dimensions of the elements of community form.

LAND USE AND STRATIFICATION

One common classification of land use is the categorization of land into "public" and "private." Most planners' approaches to classification are to identify which properties are owned by the municipal, state, or federal government and which are in private hands. For the purpose of social stratification, the public/private distinction, if based solely on ownership, is inadequate. Many private properties are percieved and used as though they were public. On the other hand, in some towns, designated public areas are actually not used by all social groups as some segments of the community feel unwanted and excluded from some territories, in many cases, as intended by other, dominating social groups. In examining the ecological nature of the public/private dimension of land use, the following points are relevant: (1) Who owns the land? (2) Who uses the land? (3) Who decides who uses the land? Answers to these questions reveal that "public" territories, such as parks, playgrounds, ballfields, community centers, and public buildings are not alwyas open and accessible to all, but perceived and used differently by various social groupings in the towns.

Other expressions of social stratification can be seen in the geography of a town. Some areas of a town are known as the older neighborhoods, populated by longtime residents with strong linkages to the town's heritage and tradition. Occasionally these residents become the town's "aristocracy," more respected and influentual in local affairs than relative "newcomers." Typically among the more stable and longlasting members of a community are its homeowners. Renters, however, comprise a more transient group, moving much more regularly and frequently. The distinction between homeowners and renters is also a manifestation of social stratification, and can be seen geographically in that homeowner neighborhoods are usually better places in which to live. The status differential is not merely a question of transiency--homeowners are also economically and culturally given a higher status position, though in some cases, renters may actually be of higher S.E.S.

In many communities, the geographic expression of social stratification is preserved through municipal land use plans and zoning regulations. Allegedly, the objective of such plans is to control the development of a community, so that undesirable or noxious uses of land are not located next to residential neighborhoods, the kind and pace of growth will be regulated in order to minimize disruption of the town, and the sensitive environmental features of the area will be protected from irreparable damage. In addition, in many communities, zoning serves as a measure to enforce the homogeneity of neighborhoods--for example, a neighborhood of single-family homeowners will be zoned to prevent the construction of multifamily rental housing, low-income housing, etc. and preserve the social character of the neighborhood. In that way, zoning becomes an exclusionary tool to prevent some people from freely choosing their home and neighborhood, and thus avoid the mixing of low income and minority residents with others.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND BEHAVIOR

In all communities the social structure plays an important role in governing the way residents behave and interact. The significance of learning that in one small town the poor live in "Riverbrook" and the rich on "Hill Street"[19] is not just a matter of geography, but really something more, a factor that helps to characterize the attitudes and images held by the different social groupings. Someone who is called a "Riverbrooker" may consider the description derogatory, while the person identified as a "Hill Streeter" might have to decide whether he was just complimented--for his high social position--or insulted--for the snobby ways of his neighborhood.

Living in the same community, all the social groups have to suffer some degree of interaction and contact. It is totally unavoidable, for the occasions for interaction--at the grocery, the workplace, the barberhop, or the neighborhood bar--are just too abundant and too common. There are occasions where people will choose to join members of other social groups for various non-compulsory activities--the school teacher and the bricklayer might sit down for a friendly game of cards or a drink, especially if they are close neighbors. But stratification is not a unifying principle. It divides people according to their social positions. The occasions for two people of different class backgrounds to socialize together are less than they are for two people of similar class positions. The greater the social gap, the less likely the groups will want to interact. The landlord will collect his rent from the tenants of the building, the day laborer will take his orders from the shop foreman or plant manager, the reliefer will fill out the government welfare forms handed to him by the welfare caseworker, but after the formalities are said and done, the likelihood of socializing and friendship between pairs goes down, despite the exceptional cases whose rarity tends to prove the rule.

What is the phenomenom at work here? Beshers calls it social distance,[20] the operating mechanism that helps define the relationships among social strata. Members of particular groups in general tend to keep to their own. They seem to avoid living too near different social classes, they intermarry less frequently than they marry one of their own kind, and they seldom go out of their way to socialize with other strata. The sharp class distinctions that are normally associated with social distance tend to wane when communities become penetrated by the wealth, values, and institutions of the larger society.[21] This is particularly true for the youth of a community, who are most receptive to new idesas and external influences, and find themselves listening to the same rock or country music, wearing similar clothing, enjoying certain pasttimes no matter what their social class background.

Social distance may be the key to the way groups interact, but it does not automatically proscribe the love of those interactions. In a general way, one can define three modes of interaction--*cooperation*, *competition*, and *conflict*. Social scientists have engaged in a long standing debate on the patterns of class interactions. Some would say that conflict is inevitable and perhaps in the long run useful; others propose that social distinctions are inevitable, and people would be best served by accepting that as a reality and finding a way to cooperate for everyone's mutual benefit. It is an argument that is probably unresolvable to everyone's satisfaction. However, the circumstances that generate these modes are largely situation-specific, that is, where conflict may be the result of conditions in Small Town A, cooperation might occur because of the totally different set of factors in Small Town B. For small towners, recognizing the tone of intergroup interactions and relating it to the social conditions of the community may be critical considerations in planning for community development.

Cooperation and competition among social strata are difficult to clearly separate. It is possible to cooperate while being competitive. In fact, the American system rests on just such a notion. What occurs is that two competing social groups will agree to work together based on the mutual expectation of rewards.[22] In other words, though the groups have different objectives and are basically competitive, they will accept a limited amount of cooperation in the hope that each group's goals are simultaneously pursued. For example, the Hill Streeters and The Riverbrookers may both agree to an urban renewal project, the Hill Streeters with the expectation that the town will be spruced up by the elimination of slum housing, and The Riverbrookers with the assumption that they will be relocated at the government's expense to more desirable housing. With mutual expectations of reward, even the most antagonistic of groups that verbalize utter contempt and distrust of each other can find a means of temporary accommodation for achieving their particular goals within a community context.

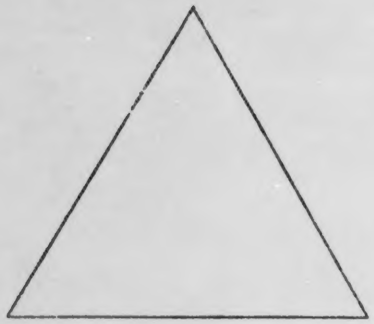
Competition does not always lead to cooperative working arrangements, however. Sometimes the interclass relations degenerate into bitterness and strife. A common manifestation is to blame the conditions of the town on the other social strata, a form of scapegoating.[23] When it comes to scapegoating, accuracy is not as important as convenience--it is the easy way out to blame the town's problems on the existence of some other social class. Often, the scapegoat is the poverty-stricken "reliefers" in the town, or sometimes a particular ethnic or racial group. Many a small towner has witnessed his neighbors and friends persecute others for less than justifiable reasons, in the end driving minority social groups from their rightful place in the community. Frequently, however, the elimination of the scapegoat leaves the town with just about the same problems as before except that now the residents must find a new scapegoat to blame. According to

Beshers, social distance is the key to scapegoating. Were it not for social distance, people would have little basis for such perjorative and biased conceptions of social classes other than their own.

It is not too difficult to see how the tensions among social strata can eventually become conflictful. The language of scapegoating can, with the right combination of factors, quickly degenerate into conflict. Lower status people may view the upper classes as "exploiters," and may attribute the lack of social progress in their lives to the domination of those in better straits. From the point of view of the upper classes, those below them represent threats to hard won privileges and rewards. Typically American is the virulent conflict that develops, not between polar opposites, but groups of very similar social status. Those families just above the welfare category may be among the most vocal opponents of a town's reliefers, while the wealthier segments of the population express a benign disinterest in the matter. What occurs is that people of a particular social group may view their nearest competitors as "enemies," when the source of their competition for scarce resources is actually several status sets higher.

Certain patterns of community stratification are potentially more conflictual than others. Clark[24] has developed a rough typology of stratification systems, based on the various shapes a social hierarchy may form. With some modifications in shapes and terminology, the forms of stratification described by Clark describe possible structures of small town social systems.

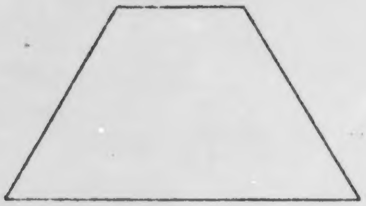
Pyramid



Where one or only a very, very few individuals dominate the social structure, this is the shape that may take place. As in a one-company town, this type may be characterized by the relative harmony of paternalistic domination by the company-owner. However, the potential for conflict is very high if this social imbalance is particularly oppressive.

Truncated Pyramid (trapezoid)

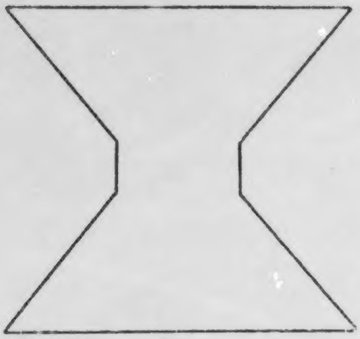
This form is like the pyramid, except that its top has been lopped off. Unlike the individual or one-family pyramid, here many more individuals are members of the upper echelons. Also, the difference between the upper and lower strata does not loom quite so large. It is obvious that this system might be less rancorous than many others.



Rectangle

Characterized by a large middle class, with a relatively small gulf between the top and bottom, the rectangular stratification system may be the most stable of all the forms of stratification.

Hourglass



Clark identifies this system, with large numbers at the top and bottom and relatively few in the middle, as potentially quite conflict-ridden. Apparently, the sharp contrast between those who are well off and those who are not is a cause of much community antagonism. Two factors seem to be important in predicting the stability of community social structures. One is the relative proportions of upper, middle, and lower classes. The larger the middle group, the more stable the social structure. Another factor of seemingly paramount importance is social mobility. If residents feel stuck in their positions, with little or no chances of advancement or improvement, frustration and the potential for conflict can brew. Where there is a strong possiblity of social mobility, or improving one's social status through gaining better jobs, higher income, or more education, the conditions for social conflict are lessened. Of course, the upward mobility of some groups is taken to mean that other groups will plunge downward in status, and that downward mobility could stimulate antagonisms as well.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What are the indicators of socio-economic status differences among residents of the town?

From census data contained in the Social and Economic Characteristics volume published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, information on S.E.S. categories can be obtained for towns as small as 2,500 in each state. However, for smaller communities, one should consult with county planning offices, regional planning commissions, and statewide agencies if data is unavailable locally or in published census volumes. It is possible, then, to classify residents according to the three categories of S.E.S.:

Income: Earned income is reported for both families and unrelated individuals. Income levels in a small town can be compared to data for the nation, as presented here:

Income Level	% of All Families in U.S. (1970)	Community
(1) Less than $1,000	1.6%	____
(2) $ 1,000 - 1,999	3.0%	____
(3) $ 2,000 - 2,999	4.3%	____
(4) $ 3,000 - 3,999	5.1%	____
(5) $ 4,000 - 4,999	5.3%	____
(6) $ 5,000 - 5,999	5.8%	____
(7) $ 6,000 - 6,999	6.0%	____
(8) $ 7,000 - 9,999	19.9%	____
(9) $10,000 - 14,999	26.8%	____
(10) $15,000 or more	22.3%	____

In comparing a community's income distribution with that of the nation certain improtant factors may be revealed. One approach is to consider the diversity of resident's incomes. Where do the bulk of residents fall? On the low end? On the high end? Or are they relatively evenly distributed? This defines the town's predominant income groups in terms of numbers. A second step is to determine the extent of the gap between the highest and lowest income groups. If a wide gap exists between top and bottom of the income scale, it is likely that the social structure is highly stratified. It is also important to look for the proprtion of residents below the poverty level. In 1970, for example, the poverty line was set at approximately $4,000, below which were 14% of the nation's families.

Occupation: Census materials can also reveal the occupations of those in the labor force, which can be divided between "white collar" and "blue collar" occupations.

Occupational Category	% of Employed Persons (U.S.)	Community
(A) White Collar		
1. professional, technical, and kindred workers	14%	____
2. managers, officials, and proprietors	9%	____
3. clerical and sales workers	24%	____
(B) Blue Collar		
4. craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers (skilled workers)	13%	____
5. operatives and kindred workers (truck drivers, delivery men, etc.)	16%	____
6. service workers (attendants, housekeepers)	13%	____
7. laborers (unskilled workers)	4%	____
8. farm workers	3%	____

It is important to explore how most of the residents of the town are employed. A blue collar town may be very different from one dominated by white collar employees. For example, the white collar community may be characterized by higher levels of participation in public affairs than the blue collar community, but the blue collar town may be less conflictful.

Education: Census materials report on the number of adults 25 years old and older by the years of schooling they have completed:

	U.S.	Community
(1) Elementary School		
a. 0 - 4 years	5.3%	____
b. 5 - 7 years	9.1%	____
c. 8 years	13.4%	____
(2) High School		
a. 1 - 3 years	17.1%	____
b. 4 years (diploma)	34.0%	____
(3) College		
a. 1 - 3 years	10.2%	____
b. 4 or more years	11.0%	____

Educational levels below the eighth grade are tantamount to "functional illiteracy." When the largest proportion of a town's population has less than a high school education, the prospects for occupational and income advances are low. Not only is educational achievement an important factor in prospects for the family's socio-economic advancement, it is quite significant in predicting social mobility (the ability to improve one's status position) for subsequent generations. Studies show that the education of the parents is "more important than the income of the family in affecting how far the youth goes in school."[25]

II. What other factors lead to social differentiation and stratification?

One should look for other less quantifiable indicators to understand community social structure. For example, in some small towns, the symbols of income, education, and occupation may be displayed openly. It is easy to observe who is better off than others. In other towns these symbols may be less conspicuous. While it may be difficult to tell specifically who is better off, one should look for some persisting pattern. The following characteristics may distinguish some important clusters of persons in town:

(1) Race
(2) Ethnicity
(3) Neighborhood
(4) Religion
(5) Lifestyle
(6) Age
(7) Sex

Many of these indicators are not readily found in available census materials. Moreover, the relative "strength" of these factors as impetuses of social differentiation may not be readily apparent merely by tallying figures. One town may have significant income difference, but that may not be as important an impetus of social differentiation as religion, for example. To evaluate the strengths of these indicators, there is no effective substitute for getting out and observing and talking to people. One might ask small groups of people prepared questions designed to draw out residents' impressions of social differentiation. In many cases, the realities of everyday life are better keys to social stratification than census data. A well thought out interview format might well discover some of these factors, and what is learned may be surprising. To confirm the results of the interview, observation of the behavior of residents may be helpful. The character of membership in social or fraternal clubs, the composition of residents for or against different sides of a public issue, the kind of people who shop at particular stores or frequent certain restaurants or bars -- these are also clues to corroborate impressions gained from talking to other residents.

III. How do different groups in the community relate to each other?

There are four general modes of interaction available to different social strata:

1. cooperation: differing strata working together to achieve individual as well as common goals;
2. competition: social strata each try to achieve their own goals while considering the goals of other groups as threats or obstacles to their own;
3. conflict: groups find the goals of others so threatening, distasteful, or destructive that they sharply contest others' goals and progress;
4. neglect (or avoidance): social groups refuse to deal with or even acknowledge the goals and needs of certain other groups.

On various community issues, these different ways of interacting become clear. Some groups as a matter of course band together and cooperate; others tend to complete for influence and control without ever falling into rancorous hostility; and some habitually find themselves in conflict, unable to work out accommodations or compromises. Finally there are some social groups that seem to be ignored, considered unimportant, and generally left out of community issues. The tasks here are two: to define the prevailing mode of interaction among the town's social groups, and to identify the methods by which differences among social groups are interpreted and resolved by town residents.

IV. What is the geography of social differentiation in the community?

In addressing this task, the basic criterion to keep in mind is, what areas of the town are used in persistent patterns of behavior, and by whom? It is insufficient to merely identify one corner of town as a "node," and a particular sheet as an "edge." More important is to define what it is that makes that modal corner important, what social function the street identified as an edge performs, and so on. Here, for example, are some characteristics that might define the social meanings of the elements of community forms:

> Paths: The distinguishing characteristic of paths in the community may be their functions as "exits" or "entrances" or "thoroughfares" or "connectors." In a low income town, the road leading out of town might be viewed as the "exit" by which those people who are able to improve their social status leave for better places to live and work. In another community, a road may be the "connector" between two distinct social groups, where by traversing that pathway, each knows it is going to meet up with members of the opposing groups.
>
> Edges: Edges are often physical barriers, but also might be social phenomena. The cliché of "the other side of the tracks" suggests a physical barrier, the railroad, that serves as a social divider,

placing an edge or boundary on the residential habitats of particular groups. Not all edges are so physically dividing. Some edges are understood to exist even though there may be no sharp physical barrier, such as a line in town beyond which members of one social group do not feel comfortable, or are even made to feel unwelcome. In many cases, communities are given edges by their residents that do not actually conform to the municipal boundaries, such as the case where a wealthy district outside of town is considered part of the community, but a low income area equally close by is conceptually "cut out" or excluded from the residents' image of the community--a distinction based not on geographic proximity, but solely on social status.

Landmarks: Landmarks result from their functinal importance (e.g. a firehall), their historic connotations (e.g. an old building serving as a linkage to the past), their physical properties (e.g. an imposing church with distinctive architecture), or their social connotations (e.g. the junk car lot in one end of town or the fancy restaurant elsewhere in the community).

Nodes: These are almost always places defined by their functional significance--places where people tend to gather, where differing social groups interact, or where events generally take place. In a sense, nodes are the locations for significant social "happenings." For example, in one town, the bar across the street from the town hall might be a very important node, where the decisions affecting all social groups in town are made and grievances are brought for consideration by community leaders who informally meet there. That bar would be a more significant node than the village council chambers across the street, where decisions already made in the bar get ratified for formal municipal adoption.

Districts: Districts are intimately related to the concepts of social structure. Though many areas of towns are named for geographic characteristics--"Hilltop," "Riverbrook," "The South End," "The North Side," etc.--the use of these names usually connotes the character of the residents who live in these areas. Residents of Hilltop might be the wealthier social strata of town, while Riverbrooker might be synonymous with "reliefer" or welfare recipient. The South End might contain a particular ethnic group, while the North End might be known as the part of town where most of the elderly live. Districts are critical instruments for identifying how social groups distribute themselves across a town's landscape.

The other important notion of social geography is the question of public or private land use. The first step in investigating this is to identify ownership and designated land use. This may be done by procuring a land use map from the municipal or county planning office. The land use map will generally classify land in town into relatively standard categories: residential, commercial, industrial, public, and undeveloped. If such maps are not avilable, a visual survey of the town can achieve a relatively accurate version of the same thing, or, to ensure exactness, one could check the books at the town hall for ownership records and compile a land use categorization in that way.

However, official definitions of land use may not accurately describe their social use. For example, the privately owned plot of land in one part of town may be used in regular affairs as a public territory, for baseball games, picnic lunches, or hiking. Some groups may feel unwelcome in nominally public territories, such as a community park or the town hall. Sometimes, perceived public territories, such as parking lots, are actually privately owned and can be returned to full private status if the groups that use the lots are deemed undesirable. These are the social dimensions of land use that are not reported in ownership records or planners' maps. For this task like some of the others, interviews, discussions, and observation are the keys to determining what groups use what land in which way.

TYPES OF SMALL TOWN SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Much of what is learned about the social structure of a small town can be applied to the typology of small towns suggested in Chapter I. However, in general, these are speculative comments based on observations of various small towns rather than well documented and accepted conclusions drawn from the social science literature on small towns.

A common characteristic of both the "penetrated" community types is likely to be highly stratified nature. But the process of growth and decline suggest different emphases: (1) The "absorbed" small town is likely to possess a social structure that mirrors the stratification of the region or nation. The absorbed small town begins to reflect the class structure of urban America, as industrialization and urbanization in the larger society induce growth and progress. The process of absorption is one of becoming more like the rest of society and just perhaps sacrificing some of the essence of smallness with it.

(2) The "abused" community is equally as penetrated, but rather than trading community autonomy for increased prosperity, it has suffered the worst of both worlds: functional alienation (the loss of community functions) and economic and population decline. Penetration in the abused community has meant that both in-migration and out-migration have occurred. The upper classes, those with skills, education, and money have left to find better prospects elsewhere. Their replacemnts through in-migration have tended to be dependent populations, those individuals cast-off by society to survive on low incomes, the public dole, with few prospects for self-improvement. For abused communities, unlike absorbed communities, penetration and decline have combined to lure away higher social strata, leaving behind an undifferentiated,[26] low status, dependent small town population.

Non-penetration is just as perplexing, in that the tendency is toward penetration. The self-reliant community, like the absorbed town, is a growing, prosperous place. To grow while still resisting penetration and the sacrifice of local autonomy implies a particular kind of social structure. In order to successfully resist penetration, the town needs to be able to fend for itself, control its own development, and avoid troubled waters where internal dissension might warrant the intervention of outside forces. The social classes in the self-reliant town relate to each other in a cooperative mode--the lack of social differentiation serves to minimize dissension in the ranks, while the broad upper strata tends to the procurement of economic benefits and preservation of community prosperity.

Within this community type is a paradox. Though the self-relient small town is able to sustain growth, growth by its very nature introduces change into the community, whether as a result of rising aspirations due to economic advancement, or the increasing linkages to the outside world that result from technological development. These changes can and do amount to increases in social differentiation, an end-product that challenges the fabric of the self-reliant town's social structure.

The residents of the ignored community suffer the persistant phenomenon of decline, yet cannot envision a way out of their predicament. These small towns serve as home to those who might be called lower working class. They work and survive, but do not prosper due to their lack of skills and the absence of opportunity. They see themselves as stuck in a rut, with nothing to offer and no place to go. Frequently, many are ex-mining towns, after desertion by the mine and the more energetic of its residents, will settle in to a long, monotonous pattern of marginal survival, with the only changes being the continued deterioration of physical and social conditions and the slow attrition of the population succumbing to old age. The social structure does not change over time; it only grows smaller.

FOOTNOTES

[1] James M. Beshers, *Urban Social Structure* (The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1962), p. 19.

[2] Ralf Dahrendorf, "Marx's Theory of Class," in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* (University of California Press, 1959), p. 6.

[3] Marx termed the first "bourgeoisie" and the second the "proletariat." Other groups, such as the shopowners, peasants, etc. would eventually be drawn into the "two great whirlpools" of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Cf. Dahrendorf, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[4] This summary is from Leonard Reissman, *Class in American Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1954), p. 57.

[5] W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, The Social Life of a Modern Community (Yale University Press, 1941) p. 82.

[6] *Ibid*, pp. 81-91.

[7] Colin Bell and Howard Newby, *Community Studies* (Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1972) pp. 198-199.

[8] Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman. *Small Town in Mass Society*. Princeton University Press, 1968).

[9] Reissman, *Class*, pp. 177-190.

[10] Charles M. Bonjean, Richard J. Hill, and S. Dale McLemore, Sociological Measurement (Chandler Publishing Company, 1967). pp. 379-460.

[11] S.M. Miller, Martin Rein, Pamela Roby, and Bertram Gross, "Poverty, Inequality, and Conflict," in Bertram M. Gross, ed., *Social Intelligence For America's Future* (Allyn and Bacon, Inc. 1969), p. 286.

[12] Beshers, *Urban Social Structure*, p. 57.

[13] Jessie Bernard, *The Sociology of Community* (Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1973), p. 54.

[14] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of The City* (The M.I.T. Press, 1960), p. 47.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[18] Ibid., p. 48.

[19] Warner and Lunt, The Social Life, p. 84.

[20] James M. Beshers, "Urban Social Structure," in Murray Stewart, ed., The City (Penguin Books, 1972, pp. 182-183.

[21] Jessie Bernard, Social Problems at Midcentury (Dryden Press, Inc., 1957), pp. 64-65.

[22] Norton E. Long, "The Local Community As An Ecology of Games," in Roland L. Warren, ed., Perspectives on The American Community (Rand, McNally, and Co., 1973), p. 46.

[23] Beshers, Urban Social Structure, op. cit., p. 84.

[24] Terry N. Clark, "Social Stratification, Differentiation, and Integration," in Terry N. Clark, ed., Community Structure and Decision-Making: Comparative Analyses (Chandler Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 27-8.

[25] Miller, Rein, Roby, and Gross, op. cit., p. 311.

[26] Kenneth P. Wilkinson, "Consequences of Decline and Social Adjustment To It," in Larry R. Whiting, ed., Communities Left Behind (Iowa State University Press, 1974), p. 44.

The Local Economy of the Small Town

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION

At one time in the history of the United States, small towns were thriving, prosperous places, able to provide employment, shopping, and homes for their inhabitants. Towns as small as 1,000 people or even less offered a variety of goods and services that made the necessity of long and arduous trips to the city relatively infrequent. Of course, until the beginning of the twentieth century, transportation over great distances was not a simple matter, making it much to everyone's benefit to rely on the local area for the necessities of survival. Since those days, two interrelated significant developments have occurred. One is in transportation: Since the widespread use of the modern automobile, the once difficult trip of 15 or 20 miles to the city is no longer insurmountable, and can be accomplished with little trouble if one has access to good transportation. If the selection of goods at the local general store is not sufficient, the small towner can now travel to a nearby retail center and meet all his needs. The other matter is the development of scale or growth: The small "Mom and Pop" stores have given way to the discount chains and supermarkets. Industrial conglomerates have absorbed or forced out of business many small companies less able to compete against the marketing power of the giants. The small locally-owned firms that were mainstays of non-metropolitan small towns have been disappearing, leaving empty downtowns and deteriorating facilities in their wake.

The prosperity of small towns has generally suffered as the locus of economic activities in the twentieth century shifted to the cities. Despite the overall progress of the United States, many small towns have not been cut in on the benefits of our nation's bounty.

Once thriving communities were abandoned as "ghost towns" when their economic purposes ceased. As long ago as the mid-nineteenth century, historians were writing about "The Dead Towns of Georgia."[1] Some towns have suffered through the roller coaster rides of "boom" and "bust" periods, fluctuating with changes in the local, state, or regional economies. Some economists have begun to question whether the small town is a viable economic unit at all. One, for example, asks if the problems of the small town are not in fact examples of the overall growth of America -- the big getting bigger and the small getting smaller.[2] Simon and Gagnon answer this fear with the utmost pessimism[3]-- prosperous small towns are destined to become fewer and fewer.

Not everyone has written off the small community. The writings of E. F. Schumacher[4] and E. J. Mishan have begun to challenge the unrelenting urbanization and "growthmania" of modern society. Mishan vividly describes the "overcrowding and uglification"[5] that results from cities growing too large. There is strong evidence around the community that the forces for further "agglomeration" in the cities are abating. In the field of economics, it is apparent that many large firms are decentralizing their operations, opening up branches and affiliates outside of major metropolitan areas. Small non-metropolitan towns have been the beneficiaries of some of these decentralizing moves. A study of the location preferences of manufacturing firms in Pennsylvania showed, for example, that between 1961 and 1969 jobs increased at a faster rate in "small center areas" than in "large center areas" (those regions in commuting distance of a city of 50,000 or more), and that small center areas have increased their share of the state's total manufacturing employment by 10% during that time.[6] In some places, prosperity has returned to the small town, but many others remain in the throes of a seemingly unending decline. The problem of economics in small town community improvement is to discover the keys to stability and progress at the small scale.

WHAT IS THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Since all small towns are not alike, decline in some does not automatically mean decline in others. The importance of understanding the local economy--the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services--is in ferreting out what distinguishes the economies of various localities, and what explains their growth, decline, stagnation, or stabilization. In planning for community improvement, there are those who believe that the essence of all positive community change can be found in the economic sector. On the other side of the coin, there are those who avoid the sight, sound, and smell of economics as making the problems of community improvement too complex and too risky. The answer may lie somewhere in between--it's a mistake to think that the picture of the small town can only be read in its economic indicators, and it's just as much of a mistake to ignore them.

Where does one begin to look at small town economies? Most observers very rarely consider the small town economy in itself. The usual techniques are either to include it as part of a larger region--a county, region, or metropolitan area--or to interpret the small town as though it were a smaller version of a city, generally separable from the rest of society. Some economists conclude that due to the nature of economic analysis, its focus on systems that are open to trading goods and services with the external world, the small community has to be analyzed with the modified techniques of regional or city economy.[7] Because most data are collected for large entities, such as the county or the labor market area, some amount of local investigation and observation to fill in gaps in available information will be necessary.

Basically, the use and movement of goods and services in the small town can be divided between two sectors. The first is the private sector, comprised of those institutions and organizations that engage in production in the free market. The second is the public sector, which involves the provision of goods and services through government institutions. The latter is presented in chapter IV. The former, the interactions of businessmen and consumers in the small town is the focus of attention here.

In the private sector, the initiative for economic activities and the actors involved in day-to-day decisions are basically entrepreneurs--businessmen, farmers, corporate executives, etc.--all out to enhance the profit of their economic firms. To understand the small town economy, the private sector may be analyzed in four segments: (1) local employment, (2) economic base, (3) location analysis, and (4) functional analysis.

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

The most important question to small towners, as it is to almost everyone, is how to make a living. The basic requirement for survival is to earn a livelihood. To understand the where and how of livelihoods, the first step is to study employment. Perhaps more correctly stated, employment studies are conducted to understand the income of a community. For a small town, this is the body of economic data most easily obtained. This requires looking for the following categories of information:

(1) What are the sources of income of the town's residents?

(2) What proportion of adult men and women are part of the labor force?

(3) In what industries do they work?

(4) What are the occupations of residents of the town?

(5) Where do members of the labor force go to work?

(6) How much do the town's workers earn?

What is learned from these bits of information? What money is flowing into the town? Are people earning wages and salaries, or do they receive a large portion of their incomes from welfare, social security, pensions, and other sources of governmental assistance? Investigating employment and income provides not only a sense of how people make a living, but also a general sense of the town's standard of living--a high percentage of welfare recipients, a significant proportion of pensioners, a number of people with seasonal, low wage, or part-time incomes--are all indicators of a local economy that is not functioning well in supporting its residents.

LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

The difficulties with small town employment analysis are tied to the size of the area in question. A small town is generally not by itself a wholly self-sufficient area. Normally, it is only part of a larger "labor market," extending beyond the borders of the small town. A low income community, characterized by high unemployment and a relatively high dependent population, may be a weak link or insufficient beneficiary of a healthier area-wide labor market.

If the labor market is the basic unit of analysis, what does one look for in terms of evaluation? A matter of saying, "this is a blue collar labor market," or "this is a low income town" is not sufficient. A blue collar community with a diversified mix of industries may well be more stable, and over the long run, better off than a white collar town with less stable employers. The low income area may be characterized by seasonal unemployment or long structural unemployment.[8] Labor market analysis takes informaion on employment, occupation, incomes, community, etc. and looks at it in three ways:[9]

> Industry mix: What industries operate locally and support local residents? As a rule of thumb, small town economies do not have the complexities of metropolitan areas. As it is relevant for small town areas, "mix" does not necessarily conform to the analytical requirements of "mix" in cities. What one looks for is whether employment is very concentrated in one or two major industries, or whether it is scattered and not so dependent on a few employers. Are the employing industries relatively disconnected and autonomous, or are fluctuations in one felt among the others? Finally, are the types of production and commerce contained in the local labor market's industry mix stable and dependable or more subject to ups and downs?
>
> Occupation mix: This concerns who comprises the workers in the labor market. The critical indicator is skills. A more highly skilled labor force will probably adapt to changes in the local economy with more success than will a low skill labor force that will need more retraining. Not only is the skilled/unskilled distinction meaningful in terms of economic flexibility, it conveys a sense of income and earnings--though not necessarily. Generally, a skilled worker will earn more than the unskilled worker, the professional employee more than the technician, but not always. Still, a mix of higher skilled workers means a greater likelihood of larger incomes.
>
> Intra-area (within the area) factors: This category is the analysis of what might happen to the labor market if it faces a major change. If a crisis hit one of the area's major employers, could the necessary inter-industry (betwen industries) transfer of workers be accomplished, or are the differences among the types of employers' needs for different skills so great that displaced workers are unable to be absorbed elsewhere in the labor market? Successful transfer of workers requires some or all of these four conditions: (1) comparable industrial or occupational lines among employers in the market; (2) comparable skill levels; (3) comparable wage rates; (4) reluctance or difficulty on the part of workers to move to other parts of the country for new jobs. In other words, the intra-area analysis considers how autonomous[10] or self-contained a labor market is. A lack of autonomy would be suggested by likelihood of displaced workers looking to other labor markets for new positions rather than staying where they are.

THE ECONOMIC BASE

Economics is in part a *predictive* social science: from a description of yesterday and today, hints of what tomorrow may bring are discernable. That is the purpose of what are called *economic base* studies. The economic base is that portion of the local economy that "is composed of the producers of goods, services, and capital who export all, or a predominant part, of their output.[11] This does not of course mean overseas exporting, but there is a parallel. In export base theory, the community is viewed like a small country in that it cannot produce everything it needs, so it must import goods and services to pay for these goods and services or it must in turn produce exports and establish a "balance of trade." Those industries that export their production are called "basic;" the rest of the local economy, that which does not produce for export to other areas of the country, is called "non-basic."

Based on some common measure, whether gross sales, payroll size, number of employees, tax receipts, or whatever, a ratio between the basic and non-basic sectors can be determined. Generally, the non-basic or residential portion is much larger than the basic sector. This ratio can be used as a multiplier to predict future growth in non-basic activities as a result of basic production. For example, in one community, the ratio between basic and non-basic employment may be one to three or "1:3." For every job in the basic sector, such as manufacturing, there are three other residents employed in the non-basic or service sector (such as retail shopping, etc.). Therefore, 100 new manufacturing or "basic sector" jobs can be expected to create 300 more non-basic or service positions. In other words, assuming the town's export industry plans an increase in its operations, the basic/non-basic ratio will help redict the benefits that will accrue to the local market sector as a result of the export sector growth.

Though economic base is a widely known concept, it is by no means infallible. The prime difficulty is in determining just what proportion of a firm's output is "export." Common sense[12] notions that certain industrial classifications, such as mining and wholesaling are "export" while retailing and government are "local," are not totally adequate. How, for example, would we automatically know how much a local manufacturer's production is export or local market oriented? Or, what would we do about the local farms that sell part of their produce to the townspeople, and part to external markets? The small towner who tries to apply the economic base concept to his or her town will have to take advantage of the town's smallness and directly ask businessmen, farmers, and manufacturers how much of their production is export-oriented.

In many small towns, the economic base may well be non-existent. Many small towns may only serve as bedrooms for workers who commute as much as thirty, forty, or fifty miles each day to their jobs. The lack of basic production does not mean that no other jobs can or do exist. The town's economic survival may in large measure be due to the good fortune of its location in a healthy labor market. Therefore, in cases where the small town is analyzed, it may be wise to resort to the level of the labor market and determine a ratio between the market area's basic employment and some factor of the town's development. Of course, there are those who completely challenge the "causality" attributed to the economic base. Blumenfeld, for example, asserts that it is not the economic base supporting the local market sector, but just the opposite, that the local sector supports the export sector.[13] Otherwise, how else would we explain the phenomenon of a pleasant Iowa service and trade center attracting a manufacturing plant to locate there?[14] Nevertheless, without resolving which is the chicken and which is the egg among basic and non-basic industries, the ratio they form does have some value in predicting future economic developments.

LOCATION ANALYSIS

What draws industries to some towns among the thousands of other small towns all competing for economic investments? The technique that helps explain why certain industries gravitate to one area over another is location analysis. Economic firms in most cases do not locate themselves randomly anyplace on the map. They are out to decrease costs and thus increase their potential to make a profit--firms locate where they can minimize costs and maximize profits.[15] Durr[16] identifies three categories of industrial location: (1) resource-oriented firms, (2) market-oriented firms, and (3) "footloose" industries to which nearness to resources or markets is not a major concern. Though markets and resources may be significant, if not dominant considerations, they are rarely considered in isolation from other factors. And despite appearances, many "footloose" locations are not as devoid of economic reasoning as they would seem. A more comprehensive location analysis looks at five factors that are important determinants of industrial location:[17]

(1) The location and accessibility of raw material inputs: for example, many firms locate as close as possible to sources of necessary raw materials, particularly if the transportation costs of the unfinished resources are high;

(2) The competitiveness of labor costs and availability of labor: the nature of the supply of labor (skilled vs. unskilled, old vs. young) and the wage rate might be taken into consideration by potential industry locators;

(3) The location of markets to which the final product is sold: where raw materials is not a major concern, closeness to the intended market may be critically important;

(4) The costs of transportation from raw material source to processing to final market sale: much industry attaches great importance to high quality or low cost transportation facilities--good highways, major railroad linkages, and sea transport, etc.; coordinating production and transportation as closely as possible helps businessmen eliminate costly terminal fees that are charged each time a product is transferred from one mode of transportation to another;[18]

(5) The fifth category can best be described as "external economies:" the location of complementary businesses close by, the bonuses of low taxes and few regulations, the availability of particular amenities that people value are other miscellaneous factors that are considered in industrial locations.

Comparing these factors in a town or region against those in other areas helps to predict what economic forms are most likely to locate there.[19] To an extent, location analysis identifies the "comparative advantages" (or disadvantages) one community has over others in competing for economic investments.

The particular industries that are drawn to various towns differ in many ways, perhaps the most important of which is in their tendency to fluctuate, or rise and fall with changes in the national or regional economies. Chapin[20] suggests five characteristics of industries that are least susceptible to sharply changing economic fortunes:

(1) Those industries whose products cater to a broad consuming base (e.g., low and medium priced products);

(2) Those with products whose purchase by consumers cannot be indefinitely delayed (non-durable as opposed to durable goods);

(3) Those industries with favorable long-term growth prospects;

(4) Those extractive industries with substantial resource reserves as yet untapped or replenishing;

(5) Those industries offering consumer goods and services as opposed to producer goods and services.

The logic of Chapin's points is quite clear. Producers can postpone further capital investments during economic downturns until the economy improves, but consumers can afford no such delays in the purchase of perishable or non-durable necessities. The products with wide market appeal are likely to be more stable items than those that are affordable only by those with much money to spare, who might spend that extra cash on some other frivolous product. Some research has gone into understanding which types of firms are most likely to locate in small towns. The Stanford Research Institute[21] has examined national data on industrial location and considered the following:

(1) Among the industry types that are as likely to locate in small towns as elsewhere are food and beverage products, clothing, fabricated metal products, and wood products;

(2) Those more particularly associated with small towns per se are textile industries, and those closely identified with raw material availabilities, such as pulp and paper, stone, clay, and glass.

SMALL TOWN FUNCTIONS

Economic Base, Employment, and Location Analysis all provide the basis for identifying small town functions. The particular industrial mix and locational pull or advantages a small town or labor market combine to give each town a distinctive character. Just by common sense observation, farmers know which towns are service and trade centers, the places where produce is sold and shipped and where equipment and supplies are purchased. Many of the small towns of central Appalachia are characterized by the dominance of the mining function. In New England, the small towns next to major rivers are known largely for their textile mills. Economists employ functional analysis to understand the distinctions among the economic purposes of communities. Why are functional town classifications important to understanding the economic dimension of small towns? Just to identify a mining town as a mining town is not very far advanced over our day-to-day understandings of things. The purpose is that once we identify the function of the town, we should be able to deduce other characteristics[22] --perhaps the demographic (population) make-up of the town or its relationship to other functional types of towns, or the probable combination of forces that caused its development, or the predisposition of residents toward particular values.

Though there is no one way to cut the pie, Harris'[23] proposed categories of community functions have been widely accepted and highly regarded. Although they are used to fit a wide range of various sized communities, many small towns will be found in almost every category:

(1) manufacturing towns[24]
(2) retail centers
(3) diversified (multi-functional) communities
(4) wholesale centers
(5) transportation centers
(6) mining towns
(7) university towns
(8) resort and retirement towns.

Another category was added after Harris first formulated this classification in the 1940s. The meteoric rise of communities without any function other than providing homes to people who worked elsewhere has been termed "suburbanization." However, not all of these "bedroom"[25] or "satellite" communities are suburban--outside of metropolitan areas, many towns function only as residential communities. Another category worth adding is the "governmental" function which describes those small towns that are basically the seats of the county courthouse, etc.

Once a town is classified by its function, what can be said about it? Here are some generalizations that can be made about small town functions:

(1) Small towns known for their manufacturing are more often than not going to be predominantly one-industry towns. The size of the labor force is not sufficient to support a more complex industrial base. The single dominant industry is likely not only to play a major role in the employment of residents, but the shaping of community values, the influencing of decisions, and the initiation and direction of community changes.[26] An important distinction in this category is whether the industry is locally controlled or absentee owned. Mott,[27] among others, asserts that the absentee-owned firm, affiliated as a subsidiary of a larger corporation with an out-of-town corporate headquarters, will not take a direct role in community political affairs, but will rely on public relations techniques and other indirect methods to pursue its economic self interest. A local economy's reliance on a subsidiary of a larger corporation also means that decisions on the economic fate of the community are not being made locally, but in such corporate headquarter circles as New York, Detroit, Pittsburgh, or Atlanta. Thus, loyalty to the particular town location is in most, though not all, cases likely to be higher on the part of the local factory owner than with the giant corporation where the town is only one of dozens of far-flung sites in its larger corporate system.

(2) Retail sales or trade communities are frequently associated with agricultural areas,[28] serving as service centers for farmers and residents to purchase equipment and goods. They are often characterized by a concentrated effort to maintain a clean and attractive downtown area, necessary for keeping the retail sector healthy.

(3) Functionally diversified towns tend to be more stable than other, more narrowly-oriented communities. In some, the variety of occupations and industries begins to resemble larger cities. However, where the city has a broad enough economic base to withstand economic shocks, in some small towns, diversification is really a house of cards that may topple. The "interdependence" of businesses in a small town implies that a downturn or failure in one makes the economic positions of the others that much weaker.[29] Diversification also implies more competition among economic institutions for land, labor, and community influence.

(4) Wholesale trade is a function rarely found as dominant in a small town. The minimum size required for the wholesaling function is easily well out of the small town range.[30]

(5) Transportation centers can range from a railroad town to a glorified truck stop. In general, they are strongly affected by changes in transportation technology. For example, as the construction of the interstate highway system made trucking a more competitive mode of transportation, rail and shipping both suffered declines that were reflected in the positions of communities dependent on them.

(6) Extractive resource communities, ranging from coal to lumber, are generally one-industry towns, and the workers are mostly "blue collar." However, even more than in manufacturing, extractive industries are highly unionized.

(7) University towns are known for the presence of youth, and an educated, professional or white collar population. However, colleges are often tax exempt and thus place added tax burdens on local

(8) Open space, recreational activities, and enhancement of the environment are prime concerns in keeping small resort towns healthy. In addition, residents have to cope with the almost inevitable fact that resort economies are seasonal--small towns in New Hampshire and Vermont really bustle with activity during the winter months, while the summer resorts of New York state are almost devoid of people after Labor Day. A number of other kinds of functions, such as resource extraction or heavy manufacturing would seriously detract from the town's attractiveness as a resort.

(9) Satellite communities, those characterized by a "substantial proportion of the labor force" working "in a larger, nearby town,"[31] find their purpose in providing a good environment in which people can reside and raise families. Along with environmental concerns, a residential community ought to be concerned with providing those services considered essential to making the town a nice place in which to live.

(10) Governmental towns, like university towns, have a white collar identity. For the most part, small towns are very rarely governmental centers for political units larger than a county. At that level, particularly when the county form of government is not particularly strong, the fact that the town is a county seat will not contribute much to its relative prosperity over any other neighboring town. The likely benefit of the governmental function is the secondary development of a shopping and trade function to service the people who come to the county courthouse.

DECLINE AND PROGRESS

Production, consumption, and distribution are all dynamic qualities. That is, they change over time and are important to characterize at any particular moment. The economies of small towns are either heading up or down, they are growing and progressing or declining and deteriorating. Of course, the direction of a community's economy is not irreversible--once a "boom" town, in later years the community may go "bust," only to rise again toward prosperity during more favorable conditions. What causes one community to plunge while another maintains a healthy economy?

Dirksen, Kuehn, and Schmidt[32] suggest four alternative explanations of community decline: (1) The Settlement Pattern Hypothesis: A community suffering decline and poverty today only reflects what originally happened to it years and years ago. The initial reasons for settling in the community and the patterns of economic and land development associated with those reasons combine to limit the opportunities available to the area in the future. For example, an Appalachian community, whose primary historical event in economic development was coal mining in the 1800s, might have been so structured toward one-industry economy that the eventual decline of the coal industry found the area without the competitive basis to lure in substitute industries.

(2) The Matrix Location Hypothesis: Simply stated, this theory assumes that the further the community is from a metropolitan center, the less flexible the economy, and the less it is able to adjust to economic fluctuations. The non-metropolitan "hinterland" is exploited by the urban metropolis. The income garnered from the small town's production is generally inadequate for purchasing the processed goods offered by the urban metropolis. In other words, the non-metropolitan communities suffer a

deficit in their balance of trade with metropolitan areas.

(3) The third is the Rural Ghettoization Thesis which asserts that three distinct processes combine to hold some non-metropolitan communities from growing. These are: (a) "intergenerational familial poverty" (the declining community tends to contain families with long histories of poverty and who, as a consequence, lack initiative); (b) "class-selective migration" (trained and educated residents tend to leave the community to search for jobs elsewhere in the country, while unskilled, low-income people move in to take their places); and (c) "changes in the productivity of economic and social institutions" (public services are inadequately supplied, and low-wage private firms are all that are drawn to the area).

(4) Economic Base in Reverse: Where economic base theory assumes that economic growth is some multiple of export-oriented industry, this theory suggests that decline is related to improvements in agricultural technology (decreasing the number of farm laborers needed), improvements in highways and transportation technology (increasing the possible area of shopping and jobs, thus opening more competition to local businesses and employers), and increases in economies of scale (meaning that as the minimum size necessary for firms to remain profitable increases, their likelihood of maintaining small town scales and locations decreases).

Thompson asserts that the declines of small towns, particularly those characterized by chronic unemployment and low incomes, can be explained by what he calls the "urban size ratchet."[33] That is, above a certain population size, growth becomes relatively self-sustaining. At least the city will not suffer the economic ups and downs that beset the smaller community. Below that critical city size, economic fluctuations impact seriously on the town, causing population losses that are proportionately unmatched for metropolitan areas. As Beale[34] says, "the faster our national population has grown, the faster and more extensively our small communities have declined." In economic terms, a 45% increase in private non-farm jobs in rural areas meant a population increase in those areas of only 0.1%; a 33% job gain in urban counties was matched by a population increase of 15%.[35] What explains the metropolitan area's apparently greater ability to maintain economic progress? Thompson cites five factors:

(1) The larger the community, the more likely the development of a diversified economic base better able to attract other industries and to withstand economic downturns;

(2) Size equals political power; the larger metropolitan areas may "outmuscle" small towns because of their greater electoral vote, and thus receive a disproportionate share of governmental benefits;

(3) With size comes investments in sewers, roads, and utilities, where increases in demand for or use of these services can be met without such large-scale investments, increased demands for such infrastructure imply greater costs;

(4) The lure of a nearby market, represented by the large population of the urban area, is stronger than the lure of being close to sources of raw materials and supply than the small town offers;

(5) Cities are frequently more open and amenable to innovations and new ideas than are small towns; many businessmen would rather test out a new investment scheme in the city rather than in the greater geographic and cultural isolation of the small town; the city is often the leader in change, followed behind somewhat reluctantly by the more traditionally-oriented small town.

But the disadvantages faced by small towns due to "smallness" do not always condemn it to economic decline, instability, and low standards of living. Some small towns make progress, maintain prosperity, and provide adequate goods and services to meet the needs of their residents. What explains their apparent good fortune? Explanations of community growth are seldom considered as much as causes of decline. Growth can be associated with the following economic strategies:[36]

(1) Focussing on the development of basic manufacturing near appropriate markets--and assuming that service industries will follow in response;

(2) Training and utilizing skilled workers, in recognition that the character of the labor force has assumed greater importance than other factors of production--raw materials, capital, etc., which are much more mobile (amenable to changes in location) than labor;

(3) Offering concessions, such as tax abatements or high quality public services or public investments, to lure and retain private sector employers--though since most communities offer industries concessions, it is difficult to foresee typical business concessions as a major factor in a corporation's locational decision.

A more recent strategy for non-metropolitan areas is termed "growth point" or "growth center" which focusses on public investments to build facilities (usually mostly highways) and to diversify and expand the local economy. However, this rarely, if ever, amounts to a strategy that benefits a small town. Growth center investments tend to end up in mid-sized cities, and the major highway construction provides residents with better access to relocate in more prosperous cities. Thompson proposes that sustained growth can be generated in small towns without necessarily making them more like a city in structure and style of life. With good transportation linking a number of small towns, the towns form a loosely associated labor market,[37] and as such, achieve the scale and diversification necessary to overcome the disadvantages of the "urban size ratchet."

In talking about community decline and community progress, there are several pitfalls that are commonly and sometimes systematically overlooked in small town improvement planning. One major issue concerns who benefits from community improvements. The prosperity of the small town is not always accurately measured by employment measures and economic base indicators. New industrial or commercial development may boost a town's tax base and increase the local payrolls. These same economic improvements may, however, totally ignore the plight of the town's low income population, as good jobs are provided only for the more highly trained residents or even outsiders. In some instances, to make room for the employees of recently located firms, the housing of low income families is razed and replaced by new home subdivisions for the new residents. What happens to those families who are displaced? Many times, they are forced to find alternative housing elsewhere, usually in another town. The community's new prosperity is not shared by those residents who are displaced or ignored. Not everyone benefits equally from community development. It is important, therefore, to exercise caution in selecting measurements of improvement or success. What we define as community progress might never benefit, or might even affect adversely, many individuals.

One of the reasons for this paradox lies in the existing unequal distribution of wealth and resources in small towns. Despite the image of middle class homogeneity, small towners, like all Americans, are characterized in part by great gaps between the wealthiest and poorest residents. When there is an unequal distribution of income, the impact is seen in the style and content of economic development planning. Generally, the wealthier members of the community--the businessmen, storekeepers, etc.--are most involved in the process. Though they believe they are planning for community improvement, they assume what benefits business benefits the whole town. That may or may not be the case. Downtown improvements may enhance the attractiveness of businesses located there, but leave unattended the perhaps more serious problems of poverty among reliefers and "shack people." On the other hand, sometimes benefits that appear to go to only one economic group in time trickle down to other segments of the population. Commercial development in some cases may appear to be helping only businessmen, but the increased tax base that results could go to improving municipal services or lowering the property taxes of homeowners in the town. The important point to remember is that in towns with unequal distributions of wealth and resources, various groups will seek economic development using the veneer of community improvement but be motivated primarily by economic self interest. To evaluate whether certain instances of economic development projects are community economic development or not, one should define what are the community's problems, and then decide whether or not the proposed improvements address those community problems, or only the interests of certain parts of the population.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

(1) What are the relevant indicators of employment and sources of income in your town?

Using publicly available U.S. census data from the volume titled Social and Economic Characteristics, identify the following conditions:

(a) What proportion of the town's adult population is in the labor force?

U.S. (1972): 61.0%   Community: ____

(b) In what occupations do most residents work?

U.S. 1972:   Community:

Blue Collar: 49%   ____

White: 51%   ____

(c) In what industries are most residents employed?

U.S. (1972):   Community:

Manufacturing: 26%   ____

U.S. (1972):		Community:
Retail Trade:	26%	____
Wholesale Trade:	16%	____
Medical/Health Services:	5%	____
Personal Services:	1%	____
Misc. Business Services:	2%	____
Transportation & Public Utilities:	6%	____
Construction:	5%	____
Finance, insurance, Real Estate:	5%	____
Mining:	1%	____
Federal Government:	4%	____
State and Local Government:	15%	____

(d) What proportion of the town's households rely on welfare, social security, pensions, or other "dependent" sources of income?

U.S. (1972):		Community:
% of population receiving A.F.D.C.*:	5.3%	____
% of population receiving Social Security benefits:	13.5%	____
% of population receiving Old Age Assistance (OAA)**:	0.9%	____
% of population receiving Aid to Permanently and Totally Disabled (APTD)**:	0.6%	____

**These programs have been altered under the new "SSI" legislation. One should check with the county public assistance board to break down SSI recipients according to OAA and APTD categories.

*Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

(e) What are the median family and unrelated individuals income levels in the town?

U.S. (1970):		Community:
Family:	$9,867.	________
Unrelated Individual:	$3,137.	________

The types of employment will hint at the narrowness or diversity of the economy--"the industry mix." The classification of jobs and sources of income reveals the skill levels and training of the labor force--"the occupational mix." To understand intra-area factors, these data categories would have to be obtained for other neighboring municipalities (which can be done without too much difficulty at the county seat) and compared for similarity of occupations, industries, and income levels. This provides a comparative sense of stability of the economy. Lacking diversity, skills, employable residents, and integration with other communities, the town's economy may be quite precarious.

(2) What is the town's economic base?

What is necessary is a visit to the town's local employers. Ask them whether their production serves markets outside the community (or local labor market), or is intended for local consumption.

Adding up all the workers involved in "export" or "basic" activities, compare that figure to the rest of the town's employment, to form a ratio:

$$\frac{\text{Basic Employment}}{\text{Non-Basic Employment}} = \text{Employment Ratio}$$

Similarly, determine the payroll of the basic sector compared to the non-basic sector:

$$\frac{\text{Basic Sector Payroll}}{\text{Non-Basic Payroll}} = \text{Payroll ratio}$$

Or determine at the town hall the tax receipts of the town's basic employers, and calculate the tax revenues garnered from other local sources:

$$\frac{\text{Basic Industry Receipts}}{\text{All Other Local Revenues}} = \text{Revenue ratio}$$

Or make a ratio between basic employment and total population or households:

$$\frac{\text{Basic Employment}}{\text{Total Population}} = \text{Population ratio}$$

It may well be that the small town is not a large enough area to make valid predictions, so a shift to the level of labor market may be necessary. What the economic base ratio does is allow one to predict, not infallibly however, some of the possible growth (or decline) that might occur with changes in the basic sector of the economy. That does not mean that the base causes local sector growth, just that according to theory, a predictive relationship exists. For example, if the employment ratio is 3 local sector jobs for every one basic sector job, then from an increase of three basic sector jobs, one would predict that nine new local non-basic sector jobs would follow.

(3) What factors have contributed to the location of these economic functions in the local community or area?

(a) What and where are the raw materials used in the town's activities drawn from? Would a change in this category be a crucial factor in the future decision making of local economic actions?

(b) What are the characteristics of the labor force (wage rates, skill levels, etc.) that make it a "drawing card?" Would changes in this category significantly affect decisions of local economic institutions?

(c) Is the location of the market for the products of the town's businesses an important consideration?

(d) Is the location relative to transportation routes important?

(e) What other factors, such as complementary industries, local taxes and regulations, etc., are considerations in the decisions of local institutions?

Overall, which factors account for the development of the town with what it is today?

(4) What economic function does the town perform that differentiates it from other small towns?

The difficulty here concerns being able to say the town is "x" or "y." The mere presence of a few commuters doesn't automatically make it a "satellite" community. Nor does a small machine shop mean it is a manufacturing center. What is needed is a set of guidelines or rules of thumb for making a humble of statistics analytically useful indicators. What is presented here are rules of thumb that are modifications of Harris' typology of community functions:

(a) Manufacturing towns: At a minimum, at least half of the population should be employed in manufacturing industries, or at least 30% to 45% of the workers should hold manufacturing-related occupations;

(b) Wholesale trade towns: Employment in wholesale trade is at least 20% of total employment, or almost 50% of retailing;

(c) Transportation communities: At least 10% of all employed workers, or two-thirds of wholesale and retail trade employment;

(d) Retail towns: Employment in retailing is at least half of total employment:

(e) Extractive towns: Employment in resource extraction (mining, lumbering, etc.) is at least 15% of total employment;

(f) University towns: One-fourth of the town's population is enrolled in post-secondary education;

(g) Governmental towns: Those designated as county seats, which accounts for the development of other industry (usually retail) in the community;

(h) Resort communities: Local industry composed mostly of hotels and motels, souvenir shops, and other tourist or seasonal activities;

(i) Diversified: Those with a mixture of occupational and industrial categories, in which no one category dominates;

(j) Satellites: One in which a substantial majority commute to neighboring employment centers.

TYPES OF SMALL TOWN ECONOMIES

At a speculative level, certain economic characteristics are associated with particular types of communities in the typology of small towns: (a) the "absorbed" community, progressing as a result of (or perhaps despite) its penetration by the outside world, is characterized by increasing proportions of white collar employment, reflecting better salaries and higher skill levels; (b) the "abused" community is more likely to be characterized by an increasing proportion of welfare recipients, unemployed, and others who are not included in on the benefits of the larger society, but are still dependent on external sources for support; (c) the "self-reliant" town, like the "absorbed" is predominantly white collar, but its stability protects it from the fluctuations and problems that affect the absorbed town; (d) the "ignored" community, rather than being loaded with dependent people, is usually characterized by stable blue collar industries, which survive largely without feeling the impact of the larger society.

There may be other characteristics that distinguish small towns nearly as well as this typology. A report by the International City Management Association[38] suggests that two distinctions are particularly important. Towns under 5,000 in population were more dependent on agriculture and tourism than towns of 5,000 to 10,000, which relied on more manufacturing and trade. Regional geographic differences were also found.

Small towns in the North Central and the South were surprisingly very high in manufacturing employment though not quite as much as the small towns of the Northeast. The western region of the country did not report manufacturing, but retailing as the major industry of its small communities.

FOOTNOTES

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[22] Robert T. Smith, "Functional Town Classification," in Berry and Horton, eds., Ibid., p. 111.

[23] Chauncy D. Harris, "A Functional Classification of Cities in the United States," The Geographical Review.

[24] Harris divided manufacturing towns into two groups, the distinction between them not all that useful for small towns.

[25] Nels Anderson, The Urban Community (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1959), p. 65.

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[28] Gerald A. Doeksen, John Kuehn, and Joseph Schmidt, "Consequences of Decline and Community Economic Adjustment to It," in Whiting, pg. 38.

[29] Ibid., p. 39.

[30] Ogburn and Duncan cite a minimum threshold population of at least 200,000, in Goodall, Economics, p. 32.

[31] Thompson, Preface, pp. 21-24.

[32] Doeksen, Kuehn, and Schmidt, "Consequences," p. 36.

[33] Thompson, Preface, pp. 21-24.

[34] Beale, "Quantitative Dimensions." p. 3.

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Patterns of Influence and Decision Making in Small Towns

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION

Democracy has come to mean self-government. Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address provides a guiding American principle, "...government of the people, by the people, and for the people..." This has come to mean that people should govern themselves and participate in those decisions which most affect their lives. Yet, most people remain governed and are not governors. Most people do not participate in key community decisions. Only thirty-eight percent of the persons eligible voted in the 1972 presidential election. Voter turnout to elect local mayors and members of City Councils is often lower. Those who take the time to participate are from a select strata, as those with higher income, occupation and education vote more often. Moreover, most people do not attend meetings to discuss community problems nor do many attempt to persuade others on what should be done to improve their town or how their tax money should be spent. Even fewer actively campaign for candidates or on policy issues, and only a handful openly demonstrate and petition their government for a redress on grievances.

At the outset, we should distinguish between direct and indirect democracy. The former involves first-hand citizen participation in public deliberations, voting on issues referred to the people, or seeking recall of public officials who are considered to have violated public trust. Direct methods emphasize that most all decisions are made by the people. Indirect democracy, instead, emphasizes the election of public officials to be representatibes of the people and to act for the people. In small towns, and especially in the town halls of New England, citizens are more likely to participate directly and, thus, truly govern themselves, while larger cities tend to require citizen reliance upon elected and appointed public officials. Such situations lead to the tentative conclusion that the smaller the place, the more feasible is direct democracy.

When we think of local government and politics, we tend to think of smoke-filled rooms where corrupt politicians play favorites or where civic leaders meet in exclusive clubs to look out for their own interests and to feather their own nests. The American politician is seen slapping people on the back, shaking hands, and kissing babies. Yet, civic books have taught us to expect that publicly-concerned citizens go to the polls and vote for leaders who have the best interests of the community at heart. How can these two opposing views be reconciled? A study of power and influence should help clarify how decisions are made in small towns. To understand the uses of power, we shall discuss citizen participation, influence patterns, decision-making forms or arrangements, community resources and the mobilization of these resources to achieve community goals and objectives.

Throughout history there has been a fascination with power. Despite democratic notions to the contrary, most studies reveal that power is unequally held or shared by only a few persons, a single group, or institutions. Simply put, some few persons exercise more power and influence than others. For example, decisions are made at home by fathers, in classrooms by teachers, on the job by bosses, in organizations by leaders, and in community affairs by public officials. Some persons apparently are more eager to acquire, and be in a position to use, power, while others find it easier to follow the leader than to be the leader. Those with power and influence may seek to further their own interests rather than look out for the interests of others or the common good. Those with influence use many methods to get their way. Some use persuasion and reason so that others may understand what should and must be done. Some may exploit our weaknesses while still others apply force or penalize those who oppose them. Very often it is difficult to discern the specific manner in which those with power and influence attempt to get their way. Of course, some persons have no power and choose either to accept their lot or to complain; however, they rarely do much to change their condition.

Power has been studied for a long time by analysts who have tried to discover exactly who governs, controls or decides what is or is not done in community affairs. While a community is inhabited by individuals, it also has clusters of persons who collectively make decisions in an attempt to direct or redirect the course of events of "who gets what, when and how." Some analysts, such as Weber, define power individualistically, "Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests."[1] Individuals, however, often find it more useful to join with others to gain influence or to try to monopolize power.

It is important to define a number of political terms related to community decision-making.[2] Participation is the taking of some action in community affairs. Influence is the status some participants accord others in deferring to their preferences rather than to their own. Power is the sum of the contributions by the participants in determining the outcome. Power structure is the representation of power relations of participants over a specific time period. Leaders are those who share power by exercising influence. Authorities are those who hold official positions. Decision-making centers - governmental and informal - are the settings wherein which authorities formulate policies. Resources are the available means participants use as the base of their influence. Mobilization is the marshalling of resources to influence the outcomes arrived at in the decision-making centers. Public functions are those goods and services provided by local government. We will elaborate on several of these in the remainder of this chapter.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizens participate in community affairs in a variety of ways and to varying degrees with different motives and consequences. Some persons are apathetic and uninvolved (about 22% of the citizenry take no part at all in political life), while others engage in the discussion of and the voting on many public issues. Still others campaign to persuade others how to vote, and some make direct contact with community leaders to indicate what should be done. Table I illustrates the range of activities ordered by what Americans do most frequently - vote - to what they do least - join a political club or organization.

Table I

Citizen Participation Activities[3]

Percent Participation	
72	Vote regularly in Presidential elections
47	Vote always in local elections
32	Active in an organization involved in community problems
30	Work with others trying to solve community problems
28	Attempt to persuade others to vote
26	Work for a party or candidate during election
20	Contact local government official about issue or problem
19	Attend political meeting or rally
18	Contact state or national government official about a problem or issue
14	Form group or organization to solve local community problem
13	Given money to a party or candidate during election
8	Member of political club or organization

While voting isclearly the customary form of participation, there are important differences among voters, as monitored by the Bureau of the Census:[4]

1. Males vote more often than females.
2. Whites vote more often than Negroes
3. Middle-aged persons vote more often than the young or the very old.
4. Northerners and Westerners vote more often than Southerners.
5. Well-educated persons (high school and above) vote more often than those of grade school or less education.
6. Employed persons vote more than the unemployed persons.
7. Persons with higher incomes ($7,500 or more) vote more than those with lower incomes.

The reasons given for citizen participation range all the way from the search for information, to enhancing one's own political career, to seeking and protecting one's interest, to promoting the general welfare of the community. The consequences of citizen participation may satisfy some of the people some of the time. If some people are not pleased with what is happening, they may be drawn into community issues to express differences of opinion. While a high rate of citizen participation is considered desirable for democracy, it has also been associated with increased community controversy and, thus considered by some as undesirable. If increased participation leads to controversy then some believe community leaders respond to those who shout the loudest, rather than run the risk of being displaced by their competitors who may seek more widespread support.

PATTERNS OF INFLUENCE

High rates of participation are related not only to democracy but to certain patterns of who governs small towns. Two distinctly different influence patterns have been discovered in studies of several hundred American communities. The first is referred to as an elite pattern characterized by a few leaders who rule, dominate, or control community affairs. The second is referred to as a pluralistic pattern characterized by competitive sets of leaders who attempt to govern, influence, persuade or bargain with others to affect specific community policies or decisions. The former is believed to prevail more often in small communities and the latter in larger cities. However neither is predictable. Some small towns may be pluralistic and some large cities may be elite. Many communities may shift from one pattern to another in times of crises or in response to a change in leadership when one group of leaders replaces another.

These influence patterns are not easy to see, hear, touch, taste or smell. Part of the pattern may be seen as the top leadership sits around the table at meetings of community organizations or by who is elected to public office. Other parts of the influence pattern may be arrived at by accepting the analysis of community leaders or by accepting rumor about who actually has influence. However, no one of our senses seems to provide sufficient evidence to identify the influence pattern and what leaders actually do.

Three approaches have been used to determine community influence by identifying 1) those who control or exercise influence by virtue of their formal position in community institutions; 2) those who have a reputation for power and dominance of community affairs; and 3) those who decide by actually excercising their influence or specific policies and issues. Any one method, briefly described, may be sufficient to describe and understand who the leaders are and how they get things done.

The positional approach identifies those who are elected and appointed to be leaders in community institutions and organizations.[5] It assumes that persons who hold formal positions can and do use the authority of their office to determine what is done in their own organizations as well as affect community affairs. Such formal positions include those in local governmental agencies such as town councils and other special authorities. Other formal positions include owners and managers of local economic firms and the heads of voluntary community organizations such as volunteer fire associations, political parties, veteran groups, luncheon, garden, historical and leisure time clubs and leaders in local churces and fraternal organizations. An inventory of those who hold such positions in town can easily be secured first by obtaining a list of public, private and voluntary organizations and then by compiling a list of the officers or members of the board of directors, trustees, etc., of those organizations. If from the list it emerges that some people hold two or more positions or hold overlapping positions in two or more organizations, it is likely that an elite pattern exists because, in actuality, only a few individuals control few key positions. Conversely, if it is rare that one person holds two or more positions, then it is more likely that a diffused or pluralistic pattern exists. Thus, if the mayor is the head of the volunteer fire company and also the leading merchant in town, he may be the key leader of an elite system. However, if these positions are held by three different persons, the resulting pluralistic system would likely involve more competition or differences of opinion on selected policies. But, should different leaders be in essential agreement on community issues, then the leadership pattern is consensual elite.

The reputational approach first identifies a group of "knowledgeable" persons who are most likely to know what is going on and who is influencing community affairs.[6] These persons, often referred to by social scientists as "key informants," may be the local newspaper publisher or editor, the mayor or city manager, a banker, a realtor, an owner or manager of a key economic firm, or some known critic of what is going on. Of these persons, the questions generally asked are: 1) Who do you regard as the most influential persons in town; 2) If a project were before the community that required a decision by a group of leaders (leaders that nearly everyone would accept) which people would you choose, regardless of whether you know them or agree with them or not; or 3) Who would you go to for advice to get approval of a specific proposal and to see that it is implemented? The answers to these questions should provide a list of reputed community leaders. Then, they, in turn, should be interviewed for their perception of community problems and solutions as well as their sense of who else is involved. One could, of course, stop with the half dozen or so interviews with knowledgeables. In any case, those leaders receiving the most nominations are considered the most influential. If there are only a few (2 or 3) persons with many nominations, the leadership is more likely to be an elite; the more evenly distributed the nominations, the more pluralistic the system is likely to be. If these few influentials belong to the same organizations and clubs and seem to agree on most community problems and programs, they may comprise a consensual elite. The pluralistic system, on the other hand, should demonstrate more differences and even competition among the leaders.

The decisional approach is intended to correct the assumption that a person who holds an important position, or who is perceived by others to be influential, is in fact powerful and does control, dominate or influence what happens in the community. The decisional approach emphasizes instead who does what on a specific community decision or issue.[7] One may begin by identifying several recent decisons and identify who - individuals, groups, or organizations - initiated the issues, what different set of solutions were proposed, who supported or opposed them, what the bargaining process involved, and who won or lost or what compromise was developed. One might conclude that if there are just a few key persons initiating issues and establishing proposals that prevail that the leadership is elite. But if the more persons compete and require compromises then the leadership pattern is pluralistic.

While most leadership studies of small towns have found the elite patterns of a few persons dominating community affairs, a number of studies using the decisional approach have found the pluralistic patterns of many different leaders competing against each other to determine who gets their way. This divergence among those who study community power has led to major quarrels among social scientists over their methods of study, their concepts of power, their identification process of community leaders, the places where decisions are made, and what kinds of community policies social scientists study. Perhaps no one approach should be relied on exclusively but use one to check out the results of the other.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

To have influence in community affairs, one must not only have access to the decision-making centers but must also have accumulated certain community resources and be ready and willing to spend them to achieve one's objectives. The followng inventory represents the resources which have been found to be commonly used in various combinations in community affairs.[8]

1) money and credit (employers who set wages and bankers who make loans)

2) control over jobs (employers who provide jobs and unions who engage in collective bargaining)

3) control over information and mass media (publishers who print the news and reporters who write it)

4) high social status and access to leaders (those who are members of a leading family and those who belong to exclusive clubs)

5) knowledge and specialized technical skills (lawyers, teachers, engineers, planners, etc.)

6) popularity and esteemed personal qualities (athletic heroes, entertainers, etc.)

7) public office and the legitimacy accorded by citizens (those elected and their appointees)

8) subsystem groups providing solidarity (religious, fraternal, and ethnic organizations)

9) the right to vote and participate (to cast a ballot, to appear at public hearings and peacefully assemble to petition)

10) leadership skills (the strategic and tactical ways to mobilize public support)

11) manpower and control of organizations (to marshall support from various community organizations)

12) control over the interpretation of values (leaders who guide the community's decision-making agenda)

While some participants have these resources and others seek them, it is not clear if just having them, acutally or skillfully using them, or being potentially able to use them is what achieves results. If one has accumulated a massive resource base such as great wealth, then simple possession may be enough, especially if such power is accepted by others and left unchallenged. A one-company town (mining) is not only a place where the owner actually uses s its resources to acquire more resources, but its control over employment limits competition and inhibits workers from expressing their complaints. A ruling clique in such a community may seldom have to use its resources to convince its opponents that it can and will use them, and that it is not worth the risk to oppose the clique. However, if available resources have been accumulated by various competitive or differing interests, then a wise and selective use of those resources may be necessary in order not to squander that influence and thus reduce the ability to compete. If individuals have no apparent resources but do have intensely held grievances which they seek resolved, they may discover that they can disrupt the community by not complying with its laws, or they may protest or otherwise embarrass those who govern. They do,so, of course, at considerable risk to themselves and their families, especially in small towns. The confrontation strategy has been effective, in some places, in gaining official response to very deeply felt problems. Most community activists, therefore, concerned themselves with the accumulation and spending of their scarce community resources in order to achieve their preferred goals and objectives.

MOBILIZATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Bringing about community action in small towns generally involves citizens and leaders. Those who take the initiative and attempt to influence others to act are mobilizers. Very often they mobilize people through the skillful use of the resources within their command. Mobilizers may be elected public officials, civic leaders, ad hoc groups who express the prevailing public opinion, or an external agency or group which wishes to induce change from outside the community. Mobilizers may be self-interested, work for the advantage of a specific group, or have the general community interest at heart. The affectiveness of mobilizers may depend on their ability to persuade their opposition, co-opt or consolidate them into their camp, bargain with them or even force them by some means to go along.

But mobilization is essentially a process involving the selective marshalling of various resources to influence those in positions of authority (elected public officials); those in community organizations (civic leaders); and those among the citizens (attentive public who all play a major role in forming expressed public opinion. Clark has developed six stages to describe community decision-making process.[9]

1) issue recognition - the development of problem statements and the pressure to have something done;

2) information collection - the gathering of facts and opinions about the stated problem;

3) formulation of policies - proposing a solution to the problem;

4) evaluation of policies - exploring alternative solutions and weighing their relative merits;

5) policy selection - determining the most feasible and acceptable solution;

6) policy enactment - translating a policy into operational terms for implementation.

Thus, some mobilizers are more effective in some stages of the decision-making process than in others. That is, some persons, say a neighborhood group, are more able to articulate what their problems are and gain attention while others, such as planners, can effectively collect, assemble, and display information. People with ideas are quick to propse a solution, but civic leaders are more likely to evaluate the alternative policies; elected officials must consider the acceptability and feasibility of a decision when making the final selection, especially if it involves the use of public monies. Appointed administrators are expected to implement the agreed-upon policy and enforce it at the lowest possible cost and to greatest satisfaction of the citizenry or, at least, of the influentials.

Budget-making procedures often contain a good set of decisions by which to examine how the various aspects of political influence developed in this chapter actually operate at the community level. Determining who participates in trying to affect authority in decision-making centers will reveal what resources are mobilized. Most of the attention of social scientists has focussed on the relationship between those in formal office and those with informal power and influence. While the municipal budget is decided upon by elected public authorities such as the mayore and city council members, those informal leaders who have status and influence often play significant roles in determining the level and priority of public expenditure.

Finally, it is important to understand the relative worth placed on available community resources. While this in part depends on the culture of the town and on who controls what resources, it should be noted that the value of any one resource may change according to its availability, its general usage, its convertibility to power, and its expendability.

DECISION MAKING CENTERS

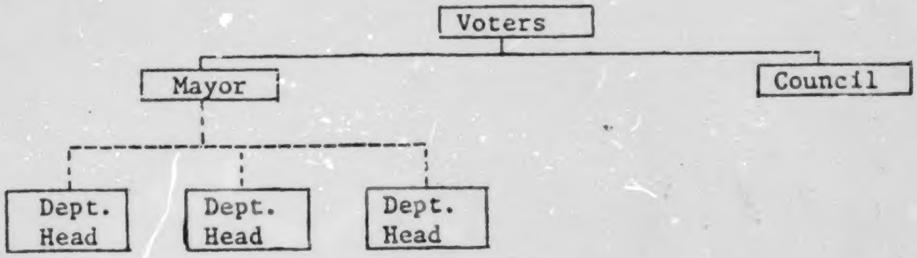
There are several different kinds of decision-making centers within any community. These centers are institutional in that they provide the function of formulating and determining specific organizational preferences as well as attempt to influence community policy. In another sense, these centers are locational in that they can be found at city hall, the fire hall, the country club, etc. One important center is, of course, local government with its auxiliary centers of the political parties which select candidates, support their campaigns, shape public opinion which eventually is expressed at the ballot box or in the network of conversations between neighbors, friends, and family. Another set of centers can be found in the variety of community organizations which include economic firms and associations where civic leaders meet to discuss their problems and preferences. Social clubs and religious congregations also comprise other sets of decision-making centers.

Much of the concern of political science has focussed on the particular type or form of local governmental system adopted. Political scientists assume that those who have public authority and the way that they are chosen for it significantly determines the key decisions in community affairs. Where there are a number of different forms of government, the principle of "separation of powers" borrowed from national government, is used to classify most towns. Two major forms are distinguishable. One is those with a separation of powers is the mayor-council form, and the other without a separation of powers is the council-manager form (see Figure I). The former gives the mayor executive responsibility and the town council legislative or policy-making responsibility. In this situation, the citizens generally look to the mayor to get things done and hold him/her responsible.

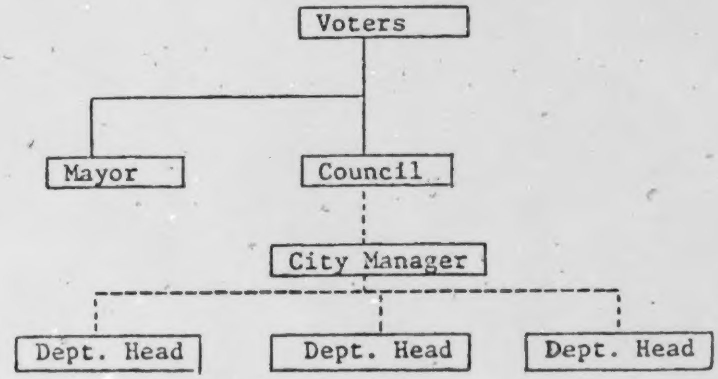
Figure I

Forms of Local Government

A. Mayor-Council


Voters
Mayor
Council
Dept. Head
Dept. Head
Dept. Head

B. Council-Manager


Voters
Mayor
Council
City Manager
Dept. Head
Dept. Head
Dept. Head

——— Election
------- Appointment

In the council-manager form of government the city council appoints a city-manager to administer their policies and carry out the day-to-day activities of local government. In this situation, the citizens generally look to the city-manager to get things done, but they hold the council responsible. Here, the mayor is more a symbolic leader of the town who votes on council matters mainly to break tie votes. Civic elites generally prefer the city-manager form of local government because it is as expected to bring business-like efficiency to local government and reduce corruption and waste.

Two other forms of local government are used, but much less so. The town-hall meeting is generally used in New England where citizens assemble to discuss and vote on community affairs. The other is the commission form where elected city commissioners assume administrative responsibility for specific government activities.

The town-hall meeting is the most accessible for citizens, while the council-manager form is the least as it places emphasis on professional administration. The council-manager form of government is considered most capable to handle routine matters which have been decided upon by the City Council, whereas mayor-council systems are considered the least efficient. Yet, on controversial issues the mayor-council form has gained a reputation for being more inclined to hear all sides and then to negotiate agreeable solutions among the contestants. Thus, city-manager type governments are expected to make more routine decisions while the mayors' form makes more non-routine decisions. Of course, in very small towns city managers are not as professional as those found in larger cities and, therefore, may not be as effective. Similarly, small town mayors who are part-time, non-paid leaders may represent one segment of the population and not be interested in, nor have to be concerned with, the different voices expressing their preferences.

A general reform movement has taken place in American local government. This movement has not only initiated non-partisan elections and the at-large rather than the ward (section of community) basis for electing the city council members, but it has also supported the city-manager form of government. The expectations of the reformers who have de-emphasized partisan politics in local government have been not only to reduce the potentially corrupt and ineffective conduct of local affairs but also to bring managerial efficiency and "business-like" practices to local government. This reform also enhances the opportunity for other community organizations, especially business or merchant-oriented groups, to fill the vacuum of the deposed political party organizations. In small towns there is likely to be little difference between those who dominate the local economy and those who dominate the local political party. They may be the same persons; if different persons, they may be essentially in agreement on the key community problems, issues and policies. It should be pointed out that the reform movement has not always been "successful" in changing local decision-making arrangements or that it has brought as much change in policy and the quality of life that its advocates proclaim.

Hillary cautions us to distinguish between such formal organizations as governments, which have specific goals, from those communal organizations which are formed by people who live together and who promote more general goals in expressing their group's preferences or in protecting their locality.[10] The organizations themselves may be affiliated with national organizations such as Rotary, Lions, etc. Many are locally developed to meet specific needs such as book, garden, and card clubs. Small communities, of course, have fewer organizations than do larger cities, but in small communities a higher proportion of the population tends to belong to some group. These organizstions often play a significant role in community affairs because they provide alternatives to local governments which are reluctant to act on an issue. These organizations also can be more easily mobilized to support common community goals and projects. Because of these circumstances, considerable efforts are made to dominate community organizations and to use them. In elite systems, control of community organizations may effectively preclude opposition. In pluralistic towns, one organization may be the base of operation for those who wish to compete with or oppose those in leadership positions..

PUBLIC FUNCTIONS AND FINANCE

What functions local government provides varies considerably among communities. Small towners generally have a limited scope of government with few goods and services. Whether the private or the public sector performs the function may be because the local government does not have the funds necessary, or because it believes itself incapable of providing the services or sees the expenditures as wasteful. The result is minimal local government, but small-towners may be ignoring what proportion of activities are actually undertaken by county, regional, state and federal agencies. Though it may appear in any particular community seems to provide few functional goods-and-services closer examination reveals that government has assumed a wide range of activities. Table II reviews who provides or where one goes to receive the following goods and services.

TABLE II*

	Provider			Located in	
Goods and Services	Public	Private	Volunteer	Local	External
Police Protection	x			x	x
Fire Protection			x	x	
Telephone		x			x
Foodstuff		x		x	x
Shelter (Housing)	x	x		x	
Clothing		x		x	x
Medical Care		x		x	x
Insurance		x			x
Education	x	x		x	x
Training Program	x	x		x	x
Water	x	x		x	x
Electricity	x	x		x	x
Entertainment		x		x	x
Restaurants		x		x	x
Sewers	x			x	x
Streets	x			x	x
Street Lights	x	x		x	x
Sidewalks	x			x	
Mental Health Clinics	x	x			x
Religion		x		x	
Pest Control		x			x
T.V. Cable		x			x
Appliance Repair		x		x	x
Auto Repair		x		x	x
Land Use Controls	x			x	x
Certification of Leadership	x			x	x
Gambling		x		x	x
Garbage Collection	x	x		x	x

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*Prepared in cooperation with Amy Corton

	Who Provides			Where Located	
Goods and Services	Public	Private	Volunteer	Local	External
Recreation/Athletics			x	x	
Parks	x			x	x
Cultural Activities			x	x	x
Pollution Control	x				x
Public Health	x				x
Hospitals/Clinics		x	x	x	x
Laundry		x		x	
Unemployment Comp.	x				x
Postal Service	x				x
Landscaping		x		x	x
Airport	x	x		x	x
Mortician/Cenetery	x	x		x	
Transportation/Bus		x		x	x
Licenses	x			x	x
Courts	x			x	x
Financial Loans		x		x	x
Banking		x		x	x
Newspaper		x		x	x
Periodicals		x			x
Library	x			x	x
Household Furnishing		x		x	x
Baby Sitting		x		x	
Flood Control	x				x
Family Counselling			x	x	x
Snow Removal	x			x	x
Ambulance			x	x	x
Pharmaceuticals		x		x	x

This chart demonstrates how pervasive the role the public sector is in our daily lives. It does not, however, evaluate how adequate they are. Despite complaints against the growth of government, those who live in small towns would be without a number of important services if there were only local government to rely on. Furthermore, it should be quickly pointed out that local government does not pay all the costs for the functions they provide as items. They rely heavily on financial aid from State and Federal governments.

An examination of a municipal budget, which is public information, readily indicates what functions are being performed by local governments and how much money is being spent. It shows the sources of revenue, or where the money comes from, and the expenditure pattern, or what the money is spent on. The demand for new and additional services is an important aspect of local decision making because it shifts the priorities for municipal revenues and expenditures and thus constitutes a significant part of any community improvement planning.

To provide the public services deemed necessary, local leaders and voterss must decide how to raise the money to pay for them. About three-quarters of all revenues come from local sources; the other quarter comes from state government. The bulk of locally derived money comes from the tax on real property---land and building.

Most all property in town is assessed and placed on the tax roles at some ratio or proportion of the "market," or "just" or "true" of "fair," value. Assessments are made according to a uniform formula by the local or county tax assessor, but the ratio to market value varies from25 to 100 percent depending on the state and/or community. Thus, if a family purchased a $20,000 home, it might have an assessed value of $5,000 if the ratio is 25 percent, or $20,000 if the ratio is 100 percent. One may appeal the final assessment to a special assessment board. Commercial and industrial property such as that of religious institutions, schools, and other non-profit or government owned facilities are tax-exempt.

The actual amount of taxes to be paid by any one property owner is determined by the tax rate expressed in mills per dollar, or dollars per thousand dollars of assessed value. For example, if the rate is 10 mills and a family owned a $15,000 home assessed at $5,000, then their tax bill would be $50. Of course, most property is taxed for municipal, county, schools, and other special districts. Thus, a family may be taxed 10 mills for city, 8 mills for county, 15 mills for schools, and 2 mills for a special sanitation district. Therefore, the tax bill would be $50 for city, $40 for county and $75 for schools and 10 for sanitation, or a total of $175.

The tax rate itself is determined by how much money local governments must raise through property taxation. Thus, when making up its budget, public officials - municipal, county and school - decide the tax rate in relation to the amount of revenue available from other sources and the amount they plan to spend. Other sources of revenues include state money from taxes on gas, cigarettes, alcoholic beverages, etc. as well as state aid formulas for education, for example. The federal government provides outright general revenue-sharing money as well as special-grants money for sewers, police, urban renewal, anti-poverty programs, etc. available to local government upon application approval. Other general sources of revenue are a series of fees for licenses to conduct businesses, building permits, and fines for violating local ordinances. Another method of securing money is borrowing to construct streets, a city hall, a sewer system, etc. The borrowed money is paid back over a number of years and has the cost of interest added to the debt.

The pattern of expenditures varies considerably from one community to another. However, public expenditures are generally made in the following order of priorities: 1) highways (maintenance); 2) police protection; 3) sewerage; 4) sanitation (garbage collection); 5) hospitals; 6) education;

7) fire protection; 8) parks and recreation; 9) libraries; 10) housing and urban renewal; and 11) health. Interest on the debt incurred by borrowing equals as much as is spent on fire protection. Shaping the particular expenditure pattern often leads to community controversy, first over the total amount as it affects local taxes, and secondly over which public functions should be increased or decreased. Most controversy occurs when one group in town wants a new function, hospital, sewer, etc., established and another apposes it for various reasons.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Citizen Participation Comm. U.S. 1972

1. What is the rate of local participation in elections--national and local?

   a. How many persons are eligible to vote (those 18 years or older)? For places 1000 to 10,000 see by individual state General Population Characteristics Bureau of the Census, 1970. ______ 67.1%

   b. How many eligible persons are registered to vote? Consult County Board of Elections or Town Clerk for number of registered voters in those precint or election districts in town. ______ 73.9%

   c. How many registered persons actually voted in the last elections for: ______ 75.7%
      - president
      - governor
      - mayor
      - town council

It is commonly believed that participation is more likely to be higher and more effective in small communities where opportunity and access to the decision-making centers are relatively easier than they are in large cities. Yet, two quite contradictory theories have been proposed. One is the mobilization theory that predicts an increase in participation in urban settings where there is exposure to more communications, interaction and support from others to be involved in politics. Milbreath, for example, finds that "...persons near the center of the society are more likely to participate in politics than persons near the periphery... persons near the center receive more stimuli enticing them to participate, and they receive more support from their peers when they do participate."[11] The alternative theory predicts a decline in partipation as one moves from the smallness and intimacy of small towns to the massive impersonalization of the city. Verba and Nie state, "In the small town, the community is a manageable state. Citizens can know the ropes of politics, know whom to contact, know each other so that they can form political groups.

In the larger units, politics is more complicated, impersonal, and distant."[12] They also find that not only does participation decline as communities grow in size but even more so as "...they begin to lose the clear boundaries that separate them from other communities. Participation in general and communal participation in particular are more widespread in more peripheral and isolated places. As one moves to the 'center' of society, such activity is inhibited."[13] As a result, they believe it important to distinguish between the following types of communities: 1) isolated villages and rural areas; 2) isolated towns; 3) isolated cities; 4) small suburbs; 5) large buburbs, adjacent cities; and 6) core cities.

2. How well attended are public meetings and functions:

    a. Regular town council meetings: ____
    b. Public hearings on special decisions, on budgets, projects, etc.? ____
    c. Ceremonial events such as the Fourth of July, parades, etc.? ____

    Ask the town clerk to see the minutes of meetings or to estimate attendance at each type of meeting.

If a community has a high degree of citizen participation as measured by voting and attendance at public meetings, it is more likely to be pluralistic and open. The more persons participating in public affairs supposedly reflects a variety of expressed points of view at the decision-making centers which stimulate public officials to respond. Lower rates of citizen participation are not only associated with elite leadership patterns but often indicate that there is a selective bias on behalf of the more affluent, well-educated, higher status persons who are generally more involved than the poor, unemployed, young and disadvantaged residents. However, one must watch for the situation where participation is habitual and where most all the key decisions are made before the vote or other means of participation has taken place.

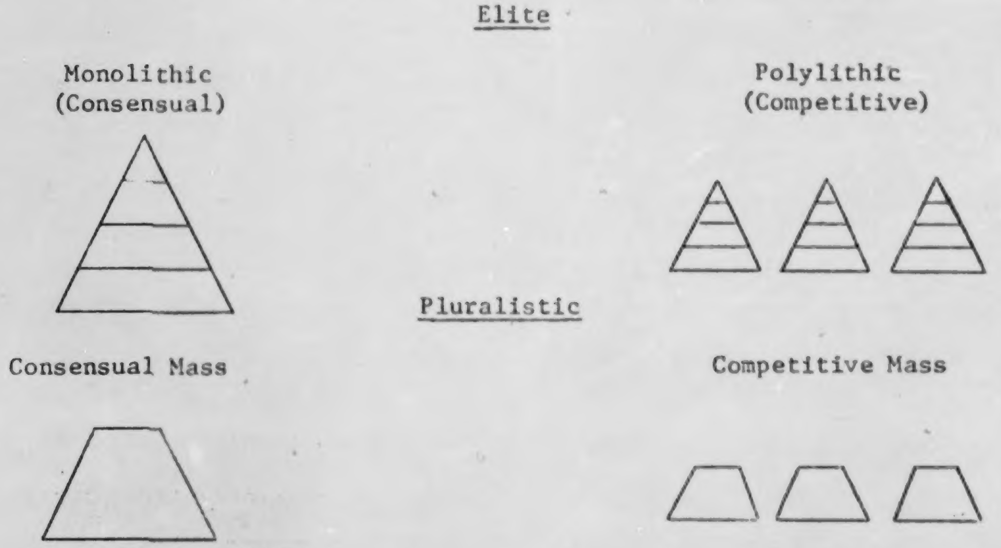
3. What is the prevailing influence pattern?

It is sometimes difficult to know who governs a community. Some would simply say the elected local officials; others believe economic elites dominate those public officials and the community in general. If the positional approach is used, a list of key officials and leaders should be compiled to see whether some individuals hold more than one position. The greater the "overlay" or multiple positions held the more likely an elite pattern prevails. If the reputational approach is used, one should ask the question, "To whom do people go to get a community project done?" The greater the number of different influential names, the more likely a pluralistic pattern prevails. If the decisional approach is used, one should take a recent problem or decision and ask: 1) who initiated action; 2) who supported and/or opposed action; 3) who negotiated a resolution; and 4) whose views tended to prevail? The more a single individual or group tended to play most of these roles, the more likely an elite system exists.

To visualize the difference between the two patterns of influence, and running the risk of oversimplification, we offer the followng diagram to emphasize their contrasts.[14] Clark has actually sketched four alternative community decision-making systems, two of them are elite and two are pluralistic. (See Figure II.) The monolithic or consensual elite system has few leaders on top of the hierarchy who generally dominate community affairs without much challenge. This pattern is most commonly found in small towns. There is considerable agreement among leaders on what should be done and how it should be done. The polylithic or competitive elite system mainly found in big cities indicates elites have special spheres of influence over governmental, economic, cultural, etc. affairs; this system tends to introduce some competition or challenge to those who attempt to dominate the community as a whole. One pluralistic system is the *competitive mass* system, leaders are not only specialized into spheres of influence, but they share power with more persons as the rank and file citizens have greater access and opportunity to have their will known, acted upon, and implemented. This leadership pattern includes representatives from many sectors of town - government officials, economic dominants, and civic leaders - who compete, bargain and cooperate without any top elite controlling community affairs. In this situation, overall community direction and guidance comes by adjustment and compromise. The other pluralistic system is the *consensual mass* system, there is virtually no difference between leaders and citizens because influence is not specialized and citizens often participate more directly. The small New England "town-hall meeting" illustrates the relatively direct role citizens play in decision making.

Figure II

Types of Influence Patterns



In trying to fit one of these diagrams to a particular town one should identify the key influentials in community affairs and observe whether they are part of a small clique or are representative of a more broadly based group. Furthermore, one should indicate the degree of comptetition between community leaders and groups. Finally, one should identify key influentials and place key persons and groups in the diagram.

A number of factors are most often associated with the elite and pluralistic influence patterns. Probably no single factor alone can distinguish between an elite and a pluralistic pattern as a combination of associated factors is often used to determine which pattern prevails. For example, a small, independent, stable community which has a homogeneous population, few community organizations, a selective inadequate resource base, and development by one company (industrial firm) which uses non-union labor would more than likely have an elite pattern. Similarly, the town would more than likely have a city-manager form of government providing minimal public services. Elections would be at-large and non-partisan (or one party control). Similarly low levels of citizen participation and little conflict over community issues would exist. Perhaps most important but more difficult to determine is the role of the informal leaders who do not hold public office. They are generally vaguely known to the general public and form a small inner clique which holds general influence in most all community-wide policy making.

It should also be noted that there is a tendency to pass judgment on which type of pattern of influence is best. The answer depends on what people feel is to their best interest. Elite systems have a reputation for being removed from the expressed will of the majority on the other. The pluralistic systems have a reputation of being more open and responsive to citizen preferences, but they are also less likely to make quick decisions to the point of being paralyzed from taking action.

4. What community resources are held or controlled by whom?

Money and Credit	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Jobs	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Information/Mass Media	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Status and Access to Leaders	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Knowledge and Specialized Skills	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Popularity and Personal Qualities	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Public Office	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Social Group Support	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Voting and Participation	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Leadership Skills	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Organizational Resources	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________
Interpretation of Values	1.________________	2.______________	3.____________

Particular resources are very important in the small town. They involve aspects of the economic structure of the community that are constantly in the forefront of small town issues. One aspect is the concentration of wealth, which in small towns is most visible in the ownership and use of land. By referring to the municipal or county tax records, which lists properties in town by location, owner's name, and amount of taxes paid, one can determine who are the town's biggest taxpayers and how many residential and commercial properties they own. The landowners' sensitivity to changes in the tax rate gives them a "stake" in municipal governance which they frequently use. Another very visible aspect of economic resources in the context of community power and influence is the control of local commerce and industry. Although information is collected at county and regional centers, the size of the small town lends itself to "in the field" observation. A resident could probably visit each local business and ask the proprieter or manager for estimates of gross sales and number of employees. The number of employees, though they may all be low wage, gives the businessman a dimension of control over a number of household livelihoods; this control may in many cases be a more significant resource than the total values of the firm's production. Since ownership and commerce are likely to be critical resouces, one must also evaluate how they are used. Sometimes a small businessman may wield greater influence than a larger firm does because of his political "savvy" and knowledge of how to use economic resources effectively for political purposes. On occasion, the influence of large landowners can be overshadowed by the influence of a small landowner whose properties are located in pivotal spots (such as downtown) and are used to the utmost political gain.

5. What is the form of a local government and the method of electing public officials?

Consult local public officials. This information is also listed for many small towns, in The Municipal Year Book 1968 (The International City Manager's Association, 1968) pp. 52-130.

A. What classification is local government?	Community
municipality	________
town	________
township	________
borough	________

B. Form of government?

1. mayor council __________
2. council-manager __________
3. commission __________
4. town meeting __________
5. representative town meeting __________

C. Do candidates run on ballot that is

1. partisan __________
2. nonpartisan __________

D. What is term of mayor?

number of years __________

E. What is size of city/town council?

number of members __________

F. What is the constituency of city/town council?

at large __________
by wards or districts __________
both __________

G. What is term of city/town council?

number of years __________

The state legislature grants certain authority to local governments by classification. Municipalities generally have granted more authority to perform more functions. Most towns (61.7 percent) with populations 5,000 to 10,000 use the mayor-council form of government and a third (34.0 percent) use the council-manager form. Most small towns also use the partisan ballot with national political party labels identifying candidates. Most council members are elected in at-large constitutencies.

6. What are the major sources of revenues for municipal or town government?

Secure a copy of the local municipal or town budget from an official at city hall.

TABLE III

Per Capital General Revenue Patterns for Small Municipalities and Townships - 1972

	Cities by Size			Townships by Size			
	5,000-9,999	2,500-4,999	Less than 2,500	5,000-9,999	2,500-4,999	Less than 2,500	Community Total $ Taxes / Total Population
General Revenue	120.14	106.38	91.40	133.14	97.74	88.33	________
Intergovt. Aid	27.71	25.17	29.89	32.46	26.14	27.32	________
Gen. Revenues Own Source	92.41	81.28	70.51	100.68	71.60	51.01	________
Taxes	57.73	49.44	40.23	90.13	65.66	55.05	________
Property	39.39	33.83	30.72	83.79	59.17	50.41	________
Charges, etc.	34.68	31.85	20.28	10.55	5.94	5.97	________
Debt Outstanding	226.81	231.49	154.05	111.99	52.13	56.57	________

Source: U.S. Bureau of The Census, Census of Government, Volume 4, Government Finances No. 4; Finances of Municipalities and Township Government (U.S. Government Printing Office 1974.

Identify how much money is received from State and Federal government. Then determine what amounts come from such local sources as property taxes, other taxes, fees, fines, etc. Note to what extent the community is self-reliant and to what extent intergovernmental transfers are used. It should be noted that state law specifies that certain amounts of gasoline taxes must be spent to pave and maintain local streets. Also note what amounts are received from the federal government for specific projects and "general revenue sharing" funds. Analysts of public finance have come to believe that heavy reliance on relatively inflexible local property taxes places cities in the difficult position of not raising sufficient money to meet the increasing costs of employees salaries, materials and services. They suggest that more use should be made of charges for specific services received such as parking meters, licenses, etc. Local public officials are very reluctant to raising local property taxes because citizens often express their disapproval face-to-face with the officials at public hearings, and at the election polls next year.

5. What is the expenditure pattern of municipal government?

TABLE IV
Pattern of Local Per Capital Public Expenditures for
Small Municipalities and Townships - 1972

	Cities by Size			Township by Size			
	5,000-9,999	2,500-4,999	Less than 2,500	5,000-9,999	2,500-4,999	Less than 2,500	Community
General Expenditure	123.69	114.10	91.92	93.58	130.34	101.23	
Highways	19.88	20.49	19.67	20.61	20.20	30.80	
Hospitals	6.91	3.24	.04	--	--	--	
Health	.52	.39	.08	.34	.25	.06	
Fire	6.81	5.30	1.28	2.89	2.71	1.06	
Police	17.75	16.34	12.20	21.10	18.65	14.26	
Sewerage	15.36	14.64	2.24	3.84	3.61	.63	
Sanitation	7.22	6.38	1.11	8.99	10.31	1.52	
Park and Recreation	5.79	4.70	.87	5.14	9.15	1.00	
Housing & Urban Renewal	1.89	1.14	--	NA	NA	NA	
Libraries	1.65	1.22	.25	--	.01	NA	
Interest on Debt	6.06	6.58	6.27	2.31	45.24	4.94	
Other	13.26	13.75	35.23	16.85	10.95	49.12	

Source: U.S. Bureau of The Census, Census of Government, Volume 4, Government Finances No. 4; Finances of Municipalities and Township Government (U.S. Government Printing Office 1974.

Identify the major items of the budget and calculate what proportion of the total budget goes for each function.

These expenditures reveal local priorities and reflect the values and interests of those who participate in community affairs either directly in elections or indirectly through influence with those in authority or with civic leaders. Intense struggles sometimes occur on what way the town should spend its public money. This is especially the case when a new program, project or activity is proposed. In some communities a very small elite determines the budget. In other places the final outcome is influenced through keen and vocal concerns aimed at public officials.

TYPES OF SMALL TOWN PATTERNS OF INFLUENCE

While most small towns are believed to be governed by consensual elites, a particular leadership pattern may not predictably be found in any one type of community. Therefore, we will confine our comments to more specific characteristics which prevail in each of the four types of places we identified in Chapter I. An absorbed community, growing and penetrated by external forces, is more likely to rely on the authority and financial aid from outside governmental units at the regional, state and federal levels. This in turn may encourage the local government to engage in increased professionalism in its public service such as through the city-manager form of government. Thus, the community will probably have more diversity which introduces some competition into the community's decision-making process.

The self-reliant community on the other hand tends to depend exclusively on its own immediate government and resists the intergrating efforts by other governments to participate; it generally receives the federal system's incursions as undue interference in local affairs. The population is more likely to be homogeneous and consensual. They are also more parochially resistant to those policies, programs, and projects which emanate from outside. The abused town is more likely to have a diverse population because it has been penetrated by outside forces. But this diversity tends to foster dissensus between newcomers who may differ considerably and those who have resided in town for some longer period of time. Those towns, generally dominated by outside forces, are also known for their policy paralysis in that few decisions get made, and those that do are largely influenced by outsiders. In the ignored small town, little exists to interest the larger outside society; some residents who wish to be unperturbed by the larger society may view this as an asset. Those who "pine" for something exciting to happen to improve their town soon recognize that insufficient skill and willingness exist within to do much to improve their ignored town.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 152.

[2] Most of these terms and definitions have been drawn from Robert Agger, Daniel Goldrich and Bert E. Swanson, The Rulers and the Ruled (Duxbury Press, 1972, (pp. 29-33.

[3] Adapted from Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, Participation in America (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972, p. 31.

[4] From a study of the 1968 and 1972 presidential elections, see U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports Series P-20, Nos. 192 and 228.

[5] A specific example of the positional approach is Robert O. Schulze, "The Bifurcation of Power in a Satellite City" in Community Political Systems, edited by Morris Janowitz (The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), pp. 18-80.

[6] While there have been reputational studies, one of the more careful studies of small towns was conducted by Robert Presthus, Men at the Top (Oxford University Press, 1964).

[7] For example see Aaron Wildavsky, Leadership In a Small Town (Bedminster Press, 1964).

[8] See Robert Dahl, "The Analysis of Influence in Local Communities" in Social Science and Community Action, edited by Charles Adrian, (East Lansing: Institute for Community development and Services, 1969), p. 32, and Terry Clark, Community Structure and Decision-Making (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 57-67.

[9] Clark, op. cit., p. 65; for a process that accounts for the decisions of total government, see Agger, Goldrich and Swanson, op. cit., pp. 24-28. 1) policy formulation; 2) policy deliberation; 3) organization of political support; 4) authoritative consideration; Event: Decisional outcome; 5) promulgation of the decisional outcome, and 6) policy effectuation.

[10] George A. Hillery, Communal Organizations (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 185-186.

[11] Lester Milbreath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), pp. 113-114.

[12] Verba and Nie, Participation, p. 231.

[13] Ibid., p. 242.

[14] For a four-fold set of diagrams of "monoliths," "polylithic," "mass participation" and "pluralistic," see Clark, op. cit., pp. 38-43.

Cultural Norms and Values in Small Towns

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER V

INTRODUCTION

Americans are known as a very pragmatic people. Our operating rule is, "If it works, do it." As a nation we have not spelled out our goals and objectives or any guiding principles by which to achieve them. As Tocqueville pointed out early in our history:

> Americans are always in action, and each of their actions absorbs their faculties: the zeal which they display in business puts out the enthusiasm they might otherwise entertain for ideas... it is extremely difficult to excite the enthusiasm of a democratic people for any theory which has not a palpable, direct, and immediate connection with the daily occupations of life.[1]

Yet few other nations have established an explicit set of philosophic goals as "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," as set forth in the Declaration of Independence. The preamble to the Constitution of the United States identifies five essential values and provides legal guidelines for the conduct of human affairs in seeking to: 1) establish justice; 2) insure domestic tranquility; 3) provide for the common defense; 4) promote the general welfare; and 5) secure the blessings of liberty.[2]

In fact, Lipset has examined all of our history and identified two key American values throughout--equality and achievement. He believes, however, that they are not entirely compatible; each gives rise to reactions which threaten the other. Equality, for example, means all persons must be given respect regardless of their high or low status because they are all humans. The contending value of achievement means that a person must assume an individual responsibility to gain the necessary capacity and skills for success. Thus,

> For people to be equal, they need a chance to become equal. Success, therefore, should be attainable by all, no matter what the accidents of birth, class, or race. Achievement is a function of equality of opportunity. That this emphasis on achievement must lead to new inequalities of status and to the use of corrupt means to secure and maintain high position is the ever recreated and renewed American dilemma.[3]

In any discussion on the culture of small towns and the values held by small towners it is important to define a few terms. Culture is the socially acquired habits, and total way of life of man-made environments. Values are the desirable standards and principles that are one's action. Norms are socially established and accepted ways of behavior. Impulses are the actions of habit and instinct expressed without regard for standards of propriety, beliefs or consideration of "reality." Interests is to have stake in the decision and to be affected as an individual (self-interest) or collectively as a member of the total community (public-interest). Ideologies are a more or less coherent doctrine of beliefs that greatly affect the way one perceives a situation and acts upon it.

Social science tends to use three interrelated terms to refer to a person's perference to take one side or another on a community decision, issue, controversy or conflict. Opinions are topical short-run judgments or impressions on questions of public affairs. Attitudes are more enduring and comprehensive views or connections. Beliefs are more fundamental sentiments on the central values of life. Opinions and attitudes are adapted to beliefs and are more amenable to change. Many of these terms are used interchangeably, a reflection on the underdevelopment of this important topic.[4]

Nevertheless one should try to distinguish between the terms, especially if one notes that a person expresses one opinion on a subject matter but when it comes time to carry it our behaves quite unexpectedly. The importance of discerning the differences between opinions and behavior has been expressed by Jacobs:

> Consciously or unconsciously, people conceal the actual grounds for their actions in a cloak of widely approved "values" (the process often called rationalization) or attempt to manipulate the action of others by persuading them that a given action either fulfills worthy ends, or contrarily, violates cherished principles. But the very tendency to seek justification, in terms of standards that others would deem acceptable, is itself a recognition of a deep-seated, widespread disposition to apply values in the process of making choices and determining conduct.[5]

Public opinion polls have become the most popular means of measuring citizen opinions, attitudes and beliefs. While few surveys are conducted on particular communities, national surveys are carried out regularly. To learn what small towners think, we must turn to the national surveys and Gallop polls' answers of those who live in different sized communities. Pollsters generally explore several areas of public concern. One is the determination of voters' preferences for candidates in forthcoming elections. A second is a measurement citizen loyalty to certain groups such as political parties, trade associations, labor unions, etc. A third is the identification of citizen preferences on specific public policies and issues such as medical care, housing, crime and the like. A fourth is an analysis of the broader concern of evaluating society and its workings in general. The results of such surveys indicate the direction citizens believe or prefer their community to move, measure the extent of consensus or agreement on the course of events, and assess the intensity or depth of citizen support either for or against what is happening or what is proposed for the future. Some analysts use survey findings to predict particular elections while others, more cautious perhaps, use them as guides for public policy.

Value Patterns - Of course, Americans prescribe to many and varied operating values. Some of the more prominent ones are:[6]

(1) Freedom--the power to determine one's own action.

(2) Individualism--a right to be different, to rely upon one's own abilities, and to cherish one's specific beliefs.

(3) Democracy--a system combining majority rule and protection of minority rights.

(4) Practicality--the adaptation of something for actual use.

(5) Pecuniary evaluation--the determining of worth by money or materialistic things.

(6) Success--the gaining of wealth and poistion or achieving one's objectives.

(7) Education--the acquisitinn of knowledge, training and skills.

(8) Science--a systematic knowledge of the physical or material world.

(10) Happiness--a belief that life should be enjoyable and that pleasure is better than pain.

(11) Humanitarianism--a belief that man is obligated to be concerned with the welfare of the human race as a whole and as individuals.

(12) Conformity--a general agreement with others and compliance with those in authority.

While these values may be generally accepted by most Americans, it is important to note that some are seemingly contradictory individualism vs. conformity - and that some are more widely accepted in particular settings - urban vs. rural or in small town vs. big city or in one town vs. another. For example, a city becomes known by the image it reflects through the values it holds; San Francisco is known for its elegance and Chicago for its virility.[7]

The sharp contrasts between small towns and big cities are noted in the following contrasting images.[8]

FIGURE I

Contrasting Images of Small Towns and Big Cities

Images of the Small Town and the Rural Society	Images of the City and the Mass Society
residents quite similar	residents quite diverse
slow rate of social and physical change	first rate of social and physical change
lack of specialization	great specialization
subjective (feeling-based) relationships	contractual relationships
few organized groups	many organized groups
slow pace and low value on time	fast pace and high value on time
high values on ascribed characteristics (such as one's family, sex, other "givens" about people)	high values on achieved characteristics (such as educational and income levels)
high value on sense of permanence and security	high value on sense of risk-taking and the unexpected

Polls have revealed important differences between the opinions held by small towners than those who reside in cities. In race relations, Harris found more city folks preferred blacks be integrated into the white society. Fewer small towners think blacks are justified in their demands and feel that blacks are moving too fast to improve their lot.[9] Perhaps a better reflector of citizen values can be found in the priorities they prefer in government spending. Watts and Free believe that, "Deviations from the norm in spending patterns among segments of the population are, of course, indicative of different value system at work within these groups."[10] Table I indicates the relative government spending priorities of those who live in cities, suburbs, towns or villages and rural areas. Small towners agree with city dwellers that there should be increased spending on crime, drugs and addicts and water pollution. City residents are more prone to support increased spending for senior citizens, medical care, and Medicaid, air pollution, education for low-income children and higher education. They both agree to current level of expenditures for urban problems, parks and recreation while city dwellers are more inclined to keep present spending levels on jobs for the unemployed, mass transportation, housing in general and public housing. Small towners, however, are less inclined than city folks to support current levels of spending for Black Americans and welfare but more inclined than those living in suburbs and rural areas.

TABLE I

Government Spending Priorities - 1972

Item	National Totals	City	Suburbs	Town or Village	Rural
Crime	88	89	87	88	92
Senior Citizens	87	91	87	83	86
Drugs & Addicts	86	85	85	82	93
Water Pollution	81	82	85	70	75
Air Pollution	80	80	85	76	77
Educate low-income child	80	83	81	79	77
Medical Care	80	84	77	77	77
Medicaid	74	80	71	76	66
Higher Education	72	75	72	76	68
Urban Renewal	69	72	70	68	58
Urban Problems	68	69	72	69	60
Jobs for Unemployed	67	69	65	64	68
Public Parks	66	66	72	64	62
Mass Transportation	66	70	66	65	58
Housing in General	64	68	68	59	57
Highways	63	62	60	63	66
Public Housing	62	70	59	62	54
Black Americans	57	66	54	58	45
Welfare	53	60	48	55	45
Space Program	25	23	28	26	26

Composite Score:

100 points - "increased"
50 points - "kept at present levels"
0 points - "reduced" or "ended"

Adapted From: Watts & Free pp. 320-322

IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Underlying these opinions and attitudes are patterns of beliefs that have attracted some analysis. Variations in regional value patterns have been widely used to explain some of the major differences throughout this country. Elazar has recorded or affected the prevailing regional values. He has discerned three major political subcultures which mold perceptions towards the role of government, influences who is active in public affairs, and directs the way local government is used. The first, individualistic,

> emphasizes the centrality of private concerns; it places a premium on limiting community intervention--whether governmental or nongovernmental--into private activities to the minimum necessary to keep the market place in proper working order.[11]

The individualistic subculture has an overriding commitment ot commercialism and pluralism and is found in the middle west. The second, moralistic, emphasizes good government as one of the greatest activities of man where there is

> ...a general commitment ot utilizing communal--preferably nongovernmental, but governmental if necessary--power to intervene into the sphere of "private" activities when it is considered necessary to do so for the public good or the well-being of the community, utilizing governmental resources for social regulation as well as for the promotion of economic well-being.[12]

This culture is a product of Puritan New England and the more secularized Yankee influences. The third, traditionalistic, accepts an hierarchical society with those on top, an elite, playing a dominant part in a government which takes a positive but limited role in...securing the continued maintenance of the existing social order.[13] This political subculture is mainly associated with the plantation agrarianism of the South. Some communities, of course, may contain any combination of these three subcultures.

There is considerable disagreement among social scientists whether ideologies operate at all in American communities.[14] That is, they have questioned whether specific value patterns prevail in small towns when compared to large cities; or whether there should be any community values operating to form and support attachments to something other than the nation. Ladd found relatively little or no ideological basis for community decision-making either in Putnam (population 8,400), located in the hinterland of Connecticut, or in Hartford (population 155,000), a large central city. In fact, he believes the small town is contemptuous of ideology because it experiences a politics "...of narrow issues, limited government activity, immediate self-interest, and personal foibles."[15] Lane, on the other hand, believes the sense of community of small towns: 1) stimulates enduring loyalties to a place; 2) creates immobility; 3) increases attachment to conventional approaches; 4) enforces a narrow moral code of behavior; 5) personalizes issues and events; 6) generates myths and heroes; and 7) ensures for solidarity among the citizenry.[16] All these recognized virtues of the small town still threaten the larger democracy and the ability of the nation to survive. He therefore proposes to remove the sense community as as a layer between the individual and the nation. This proposal, if taken the further step of eliminating the nation,would produce McLuhan's "Global Village."[17]

Vidich and Bensman found equality, industriousness, improvement and optimism to be the dominant ideologies in Springdale. They also discovered that certain values were emphasized by those in different positions within the social stratification of the community. For example, in identifying the disposition towards income, they found that prosperous farmers preferred investments; merchants preferred savings; professionals preferred work and consumption; while "shack people" were consumption oriented.[18] Presthus found an important difference between the beliefs of community leaders and those of the rank and file citizens. The leaders were more conservative, more positive towards their community, and less alientated than the rank and file.[19]

Finally, while revitalizing Stump Creek, a small former mining community, we compared the beliefs and values of two nearby small towns, one, Helvetia, a former mining town and the other, Charlestown Village, a low-income rental housing project. Table II illustrates many different sets of values summarized for each town as follows:

Helvetia.[20] A sense of asceticism, piety and devotion to hard work is widely held in Helvetia. Many residents are proud of their thrift and quite rigorous in bringing their wants and means into balance. Some are compulsive about remaining debt-free, regardless of how low their income.

Many current practices in Helvetia are traceable to Slavic origins of miners and to community activities prominent during the mining days. Catholics, for example, still separate on Sunday, the Lithuanians going to one town to worship and the Polish to another. Pride in ethnicity remains. It seems to reflect the fact that people were dealt out of the American system at birth and never had access to it later.

As in Charlestown, there is a strong premium placed upon non-involvement and privacy. The implications of these values in Helvetia are quite different, however. The outcome of privacy in Helvetia is quietness, taken to mean the lack of interaction as well as of noise. There is a very limited amount of daily visiting, practiced by families and individuals who have done so for years. The natural setting appears also to be values, although residents are not specific. "Nature" seems to connote the absence of pollution, crime, and other urban ills more than any positive values of its own.

Also in contrast to Charlestown, there is a great deal of respect for authority. This seems connected with a quite positive value placed on passivity and faith in a "welfare state" run first by the mine and now by a real-estate family partnership. In Charlestown, people generally do not complain because it doesn't bring positive results. In Helvetia, people don't complain because they often never considered it a legitimate option. A predominate sense is one of submissivienss. Few residents report any participation in working on a community problem.

There is a Protestant community church in Helvetia, offering Sunday Bible chool and services, as well as Wednesday evening prayer meetings. These functions seem quite clearly delineated as religious as there is little evidence of broader social activity stemming from church membership.

Charlestown Village.[21] The changing nature of the project has precluded--and probably will continue to preclude--the development of many stable norms and values. A "hard work" ethic does not prevail, nor do related religious values. While there are frequent clashes among residents over what "ought to be," no interest is especially well organized, with the exception of several individuals who take personal steps to back up their viewpoints about drinking and noisiness. Further, most clashes seem based far more on the situation than on abiding values.

The value that is probably most deeply held is that of privacy, and the implicit right not to be bothered or even not to be bothered or even governed. This seems to have encouraged the atmosphere in which common exteriors cover extraordinary differences in life-style. For a few, distinctiveness is expressed in the highly personalized sanctuaries they have made of their living space. For others, the apartment seems only a shell to encompass disheveled artifacts of daily life--still another aspect of living over which they seem to have lost control.

Many residents voice great concern with material possessions and indicate that money is an over-riding factor in personal happiness. Even the students living here focus on money as the goal of their education and a way of getting out of their dependent status. Many residents do not seem to relate the concept of money to detailed sense of the goods and services it can buy, but rather to the perceived general position or status it could potentially afford them.

Although all residents of Charlestown receive public assistance, there is little evidence of a tight welfare system or syndrome. Individuals do not give evidence of being part of solidified welfare families. There is little sense of embarrassment at being on assistance, and a sense that dependency is not total.

Stump Creek.[22] Stump Creek is distinctive in the strong degree to which it remains on the rural or "folk" side of virtually all of these characteristics of change. Most communities--even small towns--would seem to be much more urban.

Nor is this perception lost on Stump Creek residents. There is a strong belief that Stump Creek is different--and better--than most other places in the larger society. Much of this feeling is expressed as a shared dislike for cities--and the high crime, impersonality, and complexity attributed to them.

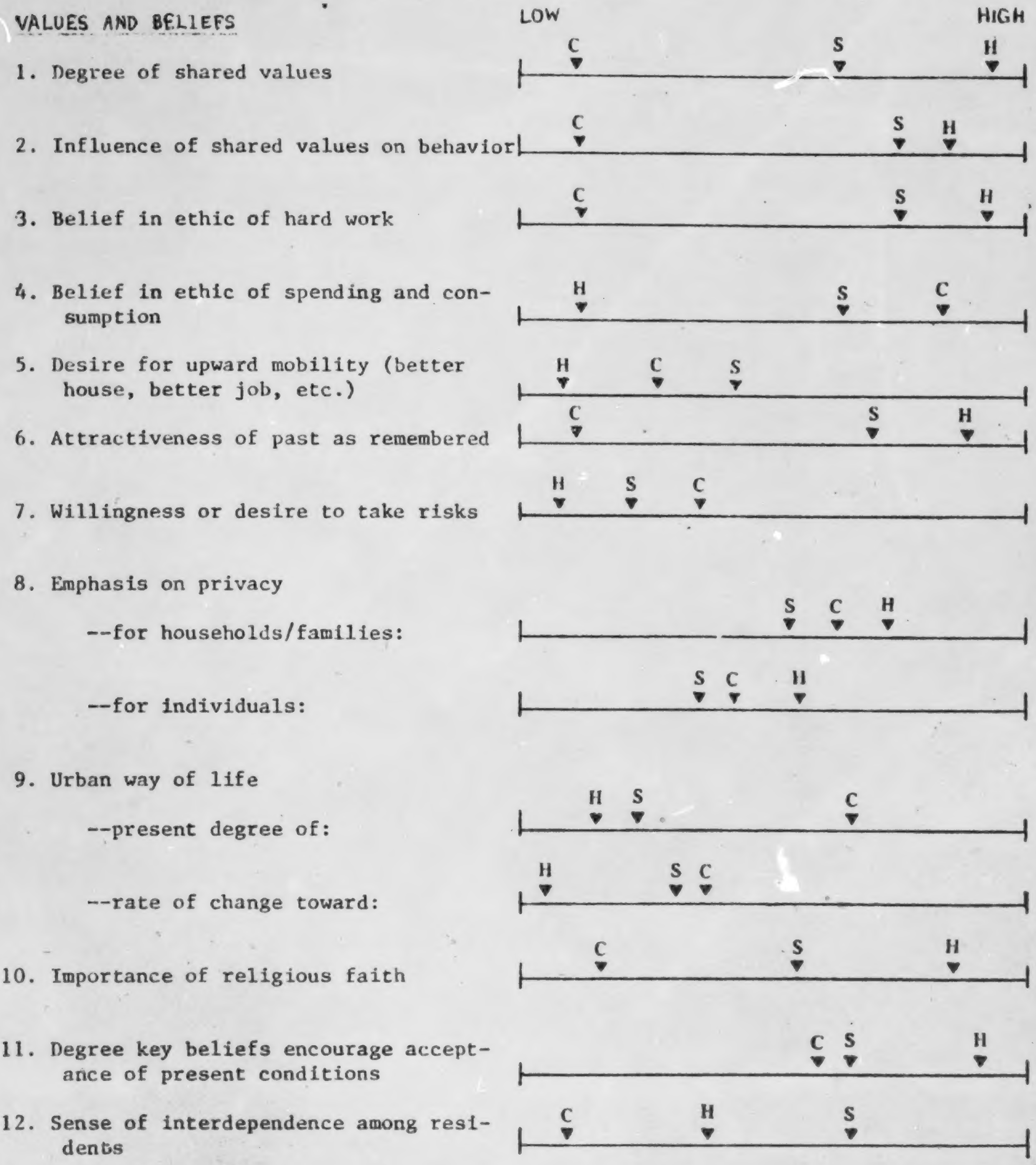
An important explanation for this shared belief lies in the selective migrational pattern when the mine closed down. The descriptions given by residents of those who stayed and those who left suggest that the characteristic of risk-taking is important. Those who did not want to face uncertainty in the world beyond elected to remain in Stump Creek. This might also help to explain the pride in endurance. As Jessamyn West observed (in her autobiography), "'I can endure anything' is often another way of saying, 'I will risk nothing.'"

It is certainly true that such factors as television, schools, the selective out-migration of former residents, in-migration of more dependent populations and other factors of the mass society are influencing traditional values, especially among the young. But change, or more accurately, response to change, is very slow in this relatively isolated, geographically-distinct little community. On one hand, children go to school and absorb the message that formal education is the key to a better life, while on the other, they quietly persist in their modest career goals, recognizing that more education is needed to seek the same job as one's father.

The contrast between the three towns can best be seen in Figure II.

FIGURE II

Comparative Value Systems



Key: C = Charlestown Village
H = Helvetia
S = Stump Creek

Source: Williams, Swanson, Linton p. 74

INSTITUTIONAL GENERATORS OF VALUES

These differential value perspectives contrast sharply with the impression that small towns are consensual with a relatively homogeneous population agreeing on basic values. Thus, even if the community is highly stratified, there may be considerable agreement because those in the upper strata may control and shape prevailing values. They do so as individuals, but most often they use the various institutions operating in the community to establish and enforce their preferred values. Five major institutions, key to any society, are generally found to play significant roles in small towns: 1) families and households; 2) religious institutions; 3) schools; 4) economic firms; and 5) governmental units. While these institutions serve many functions in community life, we discuss them here primarily as generating, perpetuating, nurturing and protecting those values, beliefs, attitudes and opinions preferred by the influential and used to guide their own organizational members and others in town.

The existence of consensus in a small community is generally associated with a homogeneous populaton. It may also be due to the existence of little diversity in the types of families, religious congregations, alternative schools, competing economic firms, or strong ideologically base political parties and/or leadership. It is expected that all these institutions agree on what patterns of values should prevail. Disagreement, of course, is likely to develop if these institutions work at cross purposes. For example, public schools, generally supervised by state agencies and often run by consolidated school boards that often incorporate several small towns or a larger area than the immediate community,are sometimes the source of dissention in small towns; different towns bring in different perspectives and beliefs and a struggle for control over competing values ensues. A major and most perplexing issue in small towns is the purpose or orientation of local education. School graduates leave the small town and seldom return. Thus, as Martindale and Hansen state, the question small towners face concerning their children's education is,

> ...whether it should be primarily directed to the needs of the local community or to the success of young people in the world at large. To direct education to the first may enhance the local community at the expense of those who migrate; to direct education to the second requirement may be to build in a mechanism that tends to pump the finest intelligence and talent of local young people into the world at large.[23]

This is related to the question whether students should be trained with occupational skills or given a more general and moral education which integrates the individual into the larger societal order. Parochial and private schools are sometimes established, although less likely in small towns, to meet alternative educational preferences. Other educational disputes occur over increasing taxes, the discipline of students, the social conduct of teachers and prayer in schools. Thus, the consensus of small towns is likely to decrease as diversity within a major institution occurs.

Similarly, as different types of families develop or locate in a town, a diversity of life styles develops; a challenge to the predominant "nuclear" (two adult) family is presented by an "attenuated" (one parent) family. The former, threatened by an alternative life style, perceives the latter negatively, especially if it is a female head-of-household who may on occasion require public assistance or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). An issue develops over the virtue of self-sufficiency as opposed to dependency; in the process much abuse is heaped upon those labeled as "reliefers." Arensberg and Kimball identify the following values as important to families: "...privacy of the home, sanctity of womanhood, fulfillment of obligations (especially those based on one's word), rights of property, defense of one's honor, and resistence to the intruder."[24] Some community disputes occur because of differences in child rearing practices, general permissiveness, disorderly behavior, and the existence of unwed mothers. Yet, even though such family differences can be the focus of community concern, very little attention has been given to the family in the study of community decision-making. This may be due to a lack of research on understanding the role of the family in community affairs or recognition that the family is more likely to resist change than facilitate it.

Most towns have a variety of religious groups which should make one aware of religious values. The introduction of an additional religious congregation in small communities to meet the various religious affiliation of the residents, as the population grows on, often can bring about competition between diverse doctrines. It is often more than a matter of institutional rivalry, and each religion has its own doctrine which affects how its respective members perceive community life and which determines what particular values they prefer. For example, Weber formulated a major distinction between the Catholic's orientations that assume the answer to life's problems are known and that those who are wise and good will accept and obey the precepts derived from them and that of Protestant's who by contrast, assume that all life's important problems are not yet known but they can be discovered by rational means. Lenski, confirming Weber's hypothesis, when indicates the importance religious values play upon community affairs by saying,

> What is possible, what is probable, and what is inevitable in any given secular organization is a function, in part, of the characteristics of the individuals who staff them; and this in turn is a funtion, in part, of the socio-religious groups to which they belong.[25]

However, most community studies tend to miss the importance of religion in community affairs. Pope provides one possible explanation for this absence when he noted that ministers and churches did not censure unjust economic conditions. He states that,

> Confusion, individualism, moralism, and evangelism are characteristic of their social outlook and nullify the actual application of a professed desire and ability to create a better world.[26]

Yet most communities experience issues that are based on religious values. These not only involve the obvious religious issues such as "release time" for religious instruction, the enforcement of "blue laws" on Sunday prohibiting commercial activity and consumption of alchoholic beverages, but also the reform of local government, desegregation of public institutions, and the flouridation of the water supply.

Those who determine money matters play a significant role in community affairs. Form and Miller believe that "There is probably no area of life-government, education, religion, welfare, and family which is unaffected by the decisions made by these economic agencies."[27] A one-company town is known for its general dominance of community life. An introduction of diversity into economic structures, discussed in Chapter 3, can result from a number of developments--a shift from dominance by one company to the presence of several competing firms, the replacement of a locally owned firm by a subsidiary or affiliate of an absentee-owned corporation, a change in the community's economic function from residential to industrial, a major change in the relative prosperity of the local economy, or a shift of local services from the private to the public sector (or vice versa), for example. These structural changes can introduce an element of dissension in the previously harmonious community. When changes threaten the small town's continued "smallness," the value of growth may come under attack. Shifts in the relative proportion of services provided by the public sector compared to sectors may stimulate challenge to the commitment of some economic dominants towards keeping a minimal government. Economic downturns, represented by changes in the occupational structure, can even raise questions about the reliance on private entrepreneurial activity for economic livelihoods. The main point resulting from changes in economic institutions are more likely to focus around:

(1) How much faith do we put in continued growth?

(2) How much should the public sector be involved in providing what has previously been provided by the private sector?

(3) How much faith do we place in the responsibility and stability of private business?

(4) How will changes in the economic institutions affect changes in other institutions?

Government is generally looked to as the one institution to which all residents are members and for which specific rights and responsibilities flow. It is the one institution that all citizens are suppesed to stand equal before the law and each person has equal access in the making of collective decisions for the community as a whole. We have also come to expect differences of opinion on what should be done and refer to it as politics. Political consensus is likely to be disturbed by changes in the formal decision-making arrangement and in the informal patterns of power and influences discussed in Chapter 4. That is, as governmental authority becomes "fragmented" by dividing the responsibility for deciding upon and paying for certain public functions between various units of local government--municipal, county, education districts and other special districts--and especially newly created regional authorities, differences over purposes, costs and benefits, and policy-making procedure are most likely to occur. Similarly, as influence patterns shift from consensual to competitive systems due to policy differences, the considerable diversity which develops may lead beyond competition to confrontation or conflict as the way to solve community problems. These differences are most frequently expressed over what is the proper scope of government. That is, some advocate the expansion of local government functions to include more activities such as urban renewal, economic development or providing parks and recreation. Others oppose these proposals as activities which will simply increase local taxes or as activities best performed by private enterprise.

The major dispute is over "who shall rule?" Agger, Goldrich and Swanson found a variety of answers: (1) industrialists-financiers; (2) proprietors-professionals; (3) public officials-administrators; (4) the propertied; (5) disadvantaged businessmen; (6) labor minorities; and (7) racists - black or white.[28] Many disputes occur over such public policies as the need for urban renewal, water and sewer systems, police and fire protection, and many other propsoals which seek to establish or redirect the functions of local government.

While it is nearly impossible to generalize on what values prevail in all small towns, there are a few general impressions worth mentioning. Ladd found values expressed in "perennial pining" (something ought to be done), personal and public morality, and tax spending.[29] Vidich and Bensman noted that candidates for public office (representatives) in Springdale, "...must subscribe to a low-tax, low-expenditure ideology and be relatively unsophisticated in the techniques of political analysis and public administration."[30] Presthus discovered both leaders and citizens preferred self-reliance and "private" initiation over government solutions to local problems.[31]

Much of the above discussinn has focussed on specific values, institutions, and disputes. A more general concern of leaders and citizens alike is the level of consensus (harmony) and/or conflict which generally prevails among individuals, groups and institutions, there are a varying threshold levels of conflict which small towners beleive should not be surpassed. Coleman points out that those individuals who do not identify with the community are, "...quickest to overstep the bounds of legitimate methods and carry the dispute into disruptive channels."[32] Those who engage in community improvement are known to proceed with two sharply contrasting approaches. One, the consensus model depends on general agreement among participants before any decision is made while the second, the conflict model, recognizes that conflict will occur and action must go on without general agreement. Donahue believes the acceptable threshold of conflict in smaller towns is lower than in big cities because the small towns "...tend to repress conflict and to forestall action when conflict occurs."[33]

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The study of a community's values, culture and norms is a difficult task and remains relatively undeveloped in small town research. Public opinion polls are costly, difficult, and a sometimes unreliable method to learn what individuals will do based on what they profess to believe. We propose several approaches to explore what cultural norms and values prevail in a specific small town. One is to examine community decisions and issues that have occurred in recent years or may occur hypothetically in the forseeable future. A second approach is to explore institutional roles and how they affect values. A third is to "vote" on a budget to establish what would be a community's priorities. The final approach provides a general inventory on the quality of life small towners believe are important.

I. Community Decisions and Issues.

To better understand what opinions, attitudes and beliefs shape community action the following steps should be used.

A. Identify a few important decisions and/or issues that developed in the recent past or are about to be or should be resolved in the community. One might reveiw the list of goods and services provided in Table II, Chapter IV. Some community decisions and issues may have or will involve:

1. install sewer treatment, water system, etc.__________________
2. provide housing for low-income familes______________________
3. increase local porperty taxes for municipal/schools___________
4. regulate land use, and establish housing code________________
5. locate industrial firm___________________________________
6. government reorganization and/or reform_____________________
7. provide parking and traffic control_________________________
8. flouridate water supply___________________________________
9. others____

B. Key Informants and Participants. To obtain reliable information on some of the above community decisions one might consult knowledgeable persons in town or scan past copies of the local newspaper accounts on what happened. In Chapter IV we indicated three approaches - positional, reputational and decisional - to identify some of the most probable key participants in town. These may include:

1. newspaper editor or reporter________________________________
2. local banker or manager of an economic firm__________________
3. mayor or city councilman___________________________________
4. president of local civic organization________________________
5. others____

C. Reasons for Supporting or Opposing. To discover the operational opinions, attitudes and beliefs one should obtain the arguments used or likely to be used by advocates on one or the other of community issues. These statements should be sorted groups which seem to be generally in agreement. That is, not only assemble the statements into those which support and those which oppose a particular proposal but sort into groups of commonly shared opinions and beliefs. Two arguments may differ on the proposal but do so by sharing the same values yet applying them differently.

II. Institutional Roles and Values.

It is difficult to discern whether the arguments and statements collected are those of individuals or represent groups in town. It is most important to learn what roles various local institutions took or will take on community decisions and issues. Therefore a brief review of their expressed opinions, attitudes and beliefs should help identify some of the important prevailing cultural norms and values that persist in town.

A. Government. As elected representatives of the people, local public officials should be key persons reflecting the public interests on taxes, on initiation of new projects, on priorities of what public functions should be performed, and on distribution of public services. Sometimes difference of opinion over these decisions arises along political party lines, or between those in authority and their critics; the critics may comprise a competing elite organized to oppose specific policies and to offer themselves as replacements for those in office. Small towns have a general reputation for adopting and accepting a minimum scope of government which keeps public spending and taxes low. Such a policy may reflect not only a preference for private programs over public programs but also a concern over the cost of public goods and services for those less able to pay (e.g., those with fixed incomes). Advocates of increased governmental activity generally believe that the public or the community has an obligation to meet the needs of people. Of course, they may be simply serving their own special interest in providing for the educational and recreational needs of their own children. Some of the most interesting value differences are revealed by determining who pays for and who receives public services. While there are few services provided in small towns, those that are provided are carefully watched. For instance, many families notice if some families receive more benefits such as better garbage collection, street repairs, or police protection than others. Disagreements over the availability of public services can reveal whether there are those who believe in equal treatment, those who believe some deserve special privileges, and those who believe some should be denied services because they are lazy, unacceptable people and such action may encourage them to leave town. Another common issue is procedural in that some persons express concern that government should ensure that the "rules of the game" and fairness be followed in community decision-making.

B. Economic Firms. Businessmen, largely viewed as making jobs available and providing goods and services, play an important role in civic affairs. Perhaps those economic firms that hire more workers are looked on as more important but the preferences of merchants and manufacturers are listened to on such policies as the growth and stability of the community, the use of public or private enterprise to provide certain services, the use of local taxes to carry out governmental functions, and the development of land-use regulations. While some merchants prefer a vital downtown, others support land-use proposals which allow for the commercial or industrial development on the outer edge of town. Both may justify their support on the grounds that their alternative will enhance growth, provide jobs, and generally benefit the community. The competition over land-use decisions should reveal the relative value placed on the self-interest of certain economic firms and the public interest on how the land can and should be used to enhance the broader community. In some cases, advocates make an important distinction between the direct short-range benefits from growth in contrast to the more indirect, long-range costs of providing services to an increasing population.

C. Schools. Local educators, who teach the community's youth for some twelve years are expected to socialize them to the country's value system as well as prepare them to enter the market-place, to participate in civic affairs, and to become adults. These objectives are supposed to be well integrated while reflecting the expressed opinions and beliefs of the local community. As educators defend their need for increased taxes, new buildings, additional curriculum opportunities such as vocational training, and the selection of particular textbooks, they may and should reveal some of the basic educational values actually being implemented. Similarly, their supporters and opponents in and out of the Parent and Teachers Association (PTA) demonstrate their beliefs as they express their opinions on what should be happening with the youth of the community. Not all these decisions are made locally; neither do the participants--school officials, parents and other citizens--always make explicit their underlying values. However, they may reveal, for example, the degree of importance they attach to science and technology in students' education. Some very divergent views on morality and the role of religion and family surface in disputes over sex-education or release time for religious instruction.

D. Religious Institutions. Church leaders--clergy and laymen--are looked to for a well developed doctrine which explains man's role in the universe and which provides an explanation of what constitutes ethical relations between humans. Perhaps in a society which provides for the separation of church and state, one should not expect much involvement by religious congregations in community affairs; yet there are a number of community decisions and issues which seem to attract religious spokesmen or wherein religious beliefs appear as the basis for position taking on public issues. It is relatively easy for religious leaders to make clear why they demand release time for religious instruction and where they stand on moral questions relating to family life. However, it may be much more difficult for them to see the immediate relevance of religious doctrines to civic affairs or to clearly articulate the applicable beliefs and have them accepted. For example to translate the doctrine of social equlaity of all mankind into the everyday experience of all residents has yet to be achieved, even though it is a doctrine supported by religious moral codes and the law on equal opportunity which is so difficult to enforce. Another example, more personal, is abortion and the "right to life" and whether local health agencies should facilitate or inhibit individual decisions. Similarly, many crosscurrents of forces develop over whether individuals can or should believe in progress and improve themselves and their communities or accept their fate as part of a larger order.

E. Family. The family as an institution is not organized as the other institutions are and is therefore less visible. It is difficult to learn what family values or orientations exist in small towns. The P.T.A. should be one source of information on family values at least insofar as children and school affairs are concerned. Some communities have family planning units which are essentially interested in birth control and assisting female headed households. Another source of information on family values would be the social case worker who supervises those families on public assistance or relief. Very often in small towns concern is expressed, not in any formal way, about the presence of juvenile delinquents, prositutes, and reliefers, but how these persons are perceived as a disturbance to the community or constitute a source of community problems is not clear. Other family-related problems develop over the special needs of an anti-poverty program for the poor or recreational programs for the youth.

After having selected a decision or issue that has or is likely to be important in the community, indicate the following for each institution:

1. Did they play a role?

   a. government_____
   b. economic firms_____
   c. schools_____
   d. religion_____
   e. family_____
   f. other (specify)_____

2. What position did or would they take and for what stated or likely reasons:

   a. government ____
   ____
   b. economic firms ____
   ____
   c. schools ____
   ____
   d. religion ____
   ____
   e. family ____
   ____
   f. other (specify) ____
   ____

3. What effect did or would they likely have on the final outcome?

   a. government ____
   ____
   b. economic firms ____
   ____
   c. schools ____
   ____
   d. religion ____
   ____
   e. family ____
   ____
   f. other (specify) ____
   ____

III. Choosing Community Priorities.

The third approach to identifying cultural norms and values would be to reexamine the use of community resources - public and private, monetary and volunteer. To estimate the use of resources applied towards the well-being of the residents and the town as a whole one should conduct an inventory of community activities. This would include not only the budgets of local governments but the efforts of the volunteer fire department and ambulance service as well as the wide variety of civic recreational, etc. programs in town. Estimates should be calculated in dollar amounts, person hours served, etc. Once the present pattern of resources is roughly known then "votes" can be taken to determine whether the present expenditure pattern of community resources is prefereable or whether some new priorities would evolve. It is important to discuss the reasons for retaining the present or changing to a different pattern of priorities. Very often these discussions are difficult because many persons can not possibly understand where new resources, notably monetary, can come from. While this approach is often "realistic," especially in small towns, and forces advocate of change and those who propose new programs or projects to face up to finding the resources, it often inhibits any further consideration of possible changes.

We suggest the followng three different topics for discussion.

A. Public choices on changing the local government's budget. Which items of the local budget would you change and by how much?

	Present	Future
1. General revenues	$______	$______
2. Intergovernmental aid	______	______
3. General revenue-own sources	______	______
4. Taxes	______	______
5. Property	______	______
6. Charges/fees	______	______
7. Debt outstanding	______	______
8. General expenditures	______	______
9. Highway	______	______
10. Hospital	______	______
11. Health	______	______
12. Fire	______	______
13. Police	______	______
14. Sewerage	______	______
15. Park/recreation	______	______
16. Housing/urban renewal	______	______
17. Libraries	______	______
18. Other (specify)	______	______

B. Community organizational activity. Which community activities would you change and by how much?

	Present		Future	
	$	Person hrs.	$	Person hrs.
1. Volunteer fire				
2. Youth recreation				
3. Beautification				
4. Environmental concerns				
5. Clean-ups				
6. Festivals, parades				
7. Art shows				
8. Religious fellowships				
9. Adult recreation				
10. Other (specify)				

C. Allocating new money. With the provision of federal General Revenue Sharing, or the "block" grants program of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 on what programs, projects, and activities should $100,000 be spent?

Item	$	Person hrs.
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

IV. Quality of Life Preferences

The final method of ascertaining the value of the residents in a community is to survey their hopes and fears. The following questions might be asked of a sample of residents or by the small group assembled to discuss community affairs.

> "All of us want things out of life. When you think about what really matters in your life, what are your wishes and hopes for the future? In other words, if you imagined your future in the best possible light, what would your life look like then, if you are to be happy? Take your time in answering; such things aren't easy to put into words.

"Now, take the other side of the picture. What are your fears and worries about the future? In other words, if you imagine your future in the worst possible light, what would your life look like then? Again, take your time in answering.

"Compare your answers with those of the nation for 1971:

Personal Hopes

	U.S.%	Community %
1. Good health for self	29	
2. Better standard of living	21	
3. Peace in the world	19	
4. Achievement of aspirations for children	17	
5. Happy family life	14	
6. Good health for family	13	
7. Own house or live in better one	11	
8. Peace of mind; emotional security	8	
9. Having wealth	7	
10. Having leisure time	6	
11. Happy old age	6	
12. Good job, congenial work	6	
13. Employment	6	
14. Freedom from inflation	6	
15. Other general concerns for family	5	

Personal Fears

	U.S.%	Community %
1. Ill health for self	28	
2. Lower standard of living	18	
3. War	17	
4. Ill health for family	16	
5. Unemployment	13	
6. Inflation	11	
7. Unhappy children	8	
8. Drug problem in family	7	
9. Political instability	7	
10. No fears at all	5	
11. Crime	5	

V. Interpreting Community Norms and Values.

From the materials collected above and closely listening to the discussions on why certain decisions, issues, and priorities ought or ought not to be adopted one can now proceed to interpret the expressed opinions, attitudes, and beliefs into meaningful patterns of community norms and values.

1. What are some of prominant clusters of values that seem to be used in community decisions, issues, and setting priorities?

2. Which opinions, attitudes and beliefs seem to be agreed upon - consensual?

3. Which opinions, attitudes and beliefs seem to be disagreed upon - competitive?

4. How strongly held and resistant to change are some values?

Using the list of values presented above by Warren one should discover some value clusters that are likely to play a role in shaping the decisional preferences of small towners. These are most likely to become evident when a controversial issue develops. In a consensual town, the general reputation of small towns, these values are not only more apparent but are also more predictive. A consensual pattern would also indicate general agreement between and among the five major institutions. That is, there would be support and mutual reinforcement by each because a clear respect for each other's point of view would exist or because no distinguishable difference among the preferences of the churches, the schools, local government, or the business community would exist. The greater the disagreement, the more diverse the values are likely to be. For example, the effort to reduce or eliminate air and water pollution which may threaten the closing of a local industry and a consequent loss of jobs. However, some disagreements may involve minor differences over where to put parking meters along Main Street. However, disagreement can develop into a major dispute such as developing a viable downtown shopping area benefiting someone's interest versus an alternative site benefiting another developer. Differences may occur over how to meet a particular objective rather than over the objective itself. It should be noted that while families generally confine their differences to the immediate household and religious groups to their churches, local goverment and the schools are most likely to be centers of many open community disputes. Competition between economic firms is expected. They prefer a consensual community as better for business and avoid controversy which discourages customers. It should also be noted that the adoption of new programs such as urban renewal is more likely to bring disagreement than is the modification of existing programs.

In a community with contending sets of leaders, political parties, and institutions, however, prediction is more difficult and less accurate; other factors such as resources, influence, and mobilization must also be considered. If one believes community leaders accurately represent rank and file citizens, then one should explore what beliefs and attitudes the prevailing leaders hold and prefer. If the leaders are not representative, then a greater effort should be made to discuss with a broader spectrum of the public what they hold dear, what they want their community to be like, and what their policy preferences are on a specific decision.

Finally, in a consensual town values may seem to be firmly held, yet there may never have been a challenge to test their strength. Challenges from internal or external forces can demonstrate which sets of values are actually firmly held and which are likely to give way. Challenges over "who shall rule" often reveal deep-seated values. Similarly, controversies are more likely to expose firmly held beliefs than are routine decisions.

It should be clear by now that values are difficult to identify, collect and analyze. They remain an underdeveloped aspect of social science and community dvelopment, especially as one moves from what is to what ought to be the quality of life in small towns. Therefore, it is most difficult to indicate what values will prevail in what type of community. Yet it is worth speculation when one considers whether or in what way a community has improved, or desires or intends to improve itself.

TYPES OF SMALL TOWN VALUE SYSTEMS.

We offer the following statements with caution in that certain value patterns seem to be more associated with one kind of place than another in the typology. The prevailing values of an absorbed town are progress, economic development, and investment. The self-reliant place is more likely to emphasize moral imperatives, savings, and locally controlled development. The ignored community obviously has little that is valued by outsiders and little energy that allows initiation of much growth or change from within. Such a community may have to concentrate its efforts on deciding what values are important before proceeding with a development program. The abused community is perceived negatively by outsiders who, with little local opposition, use the community as a repository for those on public assistance, polluting industries, sewer plants, etc. The lack of effective resistance by local citizens stems not from a lack of influence alone but from a self-perception that they lack the strength of a basis from which to defy external forces and to create an alternative image through which they can marshall support to affect external agencies.

FOOTNOTES

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Problem Solving in the Small Town Context

CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VI

INTRODUCTION

Few people in a small town are so "streetwise" and "savvy" that they can instinctively tell just what actions will and will not achieve their desired goals. Most people need to know something about the town, to get the facts on how it works, which groups are dominant, who makes decisions, and what values are important before we know what we should do. Often, we do not know what information to seek in order to piece together a picture of how our community operates. The preceding four chapters provide a framework to address just this issue—what do we need to find out if we want to understand our town? In Chapter II, the Social Structure of a small town was described, and methods for investigating it were proposed in a discussion guideline. Similarly, in Chapter III several ways of looking at the small town's Local Economy were analyzed, straightforward suggestions for small towners to follow. Chapter IV brings up the topic of Patterns of Decision-Making and Influence--how are the day-to-day functions of a small town managed and controlled. Finally, in Chapter V, the critical role of Cultural Values and Norms, the beliefs and attitudes that motivate people toward certain goals and not others, was described. All together, these four dimensions add up to the basic components of a small town's social ecology.

But the focus of the introductory chapter points out the differences among small towns. Some want to change and improve or "develop," while others feel like they have had enough of development and want to slow down the tempo of change. Others have been engulfed in long periods of decline and want to reverse those trends and "revitalize," while still others are "vital" communities and want to preserve and enhance their vitality. The primary motivation among all these communities is generally community improvement. Certainly it means different things in different towns--something as small as a community clean-up campaign in one place, something as major as a comprehensive industrial development program in another. Time after time, the best of motivations do not produce the desired results. One community improvement movement may reach only a portion of its goals, other efforts may actually be stymied by lack of support, or bitter opposition and in-fighting. Not all opposition to community improvement is from people digging in their heels against any and all change, though to be sure those people do exist. In some cases, residents quite rightfully reject half-baked ideas which if implemented would cause more problems than they would solve. In more cases than not, really good, well-documented proposals go unimplemented for lack of support, or get started but then lose momentum as backers get sidetracked or frustrated.

If a serious proposal is to get off the ground, it must be designed to meet, at a minimum, two fundamental guideposts. First, it must "fit" the target community, that is, it should address the specific character, structure, and needs of the town, and be formulated in such a way that residents can recognize and support its positive value. This is accomplished in part by investigating the small town's social ecology, understanding the workings of the components of the community. With this knowledge, proposed improvements can be geared toward accurately reflecting community conditions. But that is only half the battle. Translating a good idea into action requires an appreciation of the second guidepost: how community problems that necessitate planned responses arise, become known, and get resolved. This chapter will offer some perpectives for understanding community problems and problem-solving in the context of the small town social ecology.

PROBLEMS: FROM NEEDS TO CRISES

How problems arise is a topic for endless debate, one that cannot be resolved here. What is considered an urgent problem in one community may be quite unimportant in the next. For example, in one town the potholes in the road may be an accepted way of life, but polluting the creek causes a popular uproar. In the town down the road, however, the stream may be tinged pink from acid run-offs due to strip mining without generating much concern, but the question of paving the main street draws people out in droves. Certainly the residents' perceptions of problems differ from town to town, due to different community political and economic conditions, local values and cultures, and individual and group motivations--all of these closely related to the four dimensions of a town's social ecology.

Though the content of problems may vary from context to context, the methods people use for defining problems are somewhat more regular. One common method is to identify the basic _needs_ of a group of residents or a whole community. Where conditions are discovered to fall below the community's needs, a problem would then be said to exist. For example, one might identify the minimum income needs of a family of four at, say, $4,000, and therefore any families earning below that figure are not receiving enough money to meet their basic needs. Not all needs criteria are so arbitrarily defined. Many poverty indicators are based on studies that identify the minimal requirements of a household or individual (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, etc.) and calculate those costs by referring to the "Consumer Price Index" and other devices.

But difficulties in data collection, monitoring price changes (from inflation), and determining minimum standards of living that almost everyone would agree with causes many people to revert back to a more absolute definition. For example, a very common method of identifying poverty-stricken families is to classify those families earning less than 80% of the town's median income as below the poverty line. Therefore in a town where the median family income is $10,000, all those earning $8,000 or less would be considered poor.

The failure of these standards of needs comes from the relative nature of many problems. What is low income, what is bad housing, what is a maximum acceptable level of pollution are only partially amenable to absolute needs criteria. Poverty is many times a reflection of the gap between the highest and lowest income groups, rather than being unable to afford the essentials of survival. What is minimally acceptable housing differs from definitions of adequate shelter from the elements--criteria of overcrowding, plumbing, and cost vary according to the local cultural, geographic, and economic factors. Pollution standards are, at certain levels, connected to health and safety, but in many cases, such as with clean air and water, what is acceptably clean to one person is totally unacceptable to another.

On a community or town level, the relative nature of needs is not the only drawback of absolute indicators. It is difficult to achieve a community-wide concensus on what constitutes a community need. At least two factors come into play. Sometimes the existence of sectors of the population with unmet needs is hidden from most people. Perhaps those people with unmet needs do not vocalize their concerns because they believe no one will listen, or sometimes because they are in one way or another prevented form doing so. Other times those with the greatest need are most likely to remain silent. Another factor may be termed "differential impacts" -- conditions that are undesirable for one group may be beneficial for another. Concensus on the first group's needs may be virtually impossible when potential solutions will negatively affect other groups. One group's needs are not necessarily accepted as another group's problems.

Either way, absolute or relative, the existence of unmet needs constitutes a problem for a community. What the threshold, that is, the magnetude of the need, may be for thrusting the problem onto the communty's center stage is a matter of contention. But when it does, small towns exhibit many different ways of handling the issue. One orientation might be called the non-problem approach. Town leaders hold to a belief that conditions are acceptable as they are, and that changes are not necessary. This is no doubt much more common than one might suspect. It is not a comfortable or enjoyable process confronting problems. Both leaders and residents would like to think that their town has been spared from the turbulance of the rest of American society. But this probably involves a great deal of self-deception too. These towns may think they have no problems and proceed accordingly. However, the reality of these communities suggest that to deny the existence of a problem does not make it go away.

The non-problem appraoch often begets non-decisions by municipal officials. In non-decision making,[1] leaders attempt to resist impetuses to change present conditions. Residents with a grievance or community issue may find local leaders unavailable, or unwilling to listen, or unable to get the information they need, all of which prevent their concerns from being aired publicly. Or if the problem does make it to the forefront of the public attention, it may be allowed to wither at that point--tabled, sent to committee, the board lacks a quorum, additional study needed—and the issue is never adequately resolved. Non-decision making is a very typical mechanism for refusing to deal with problems or even pretending they don't exist. This sort of community probably is dominated by a highly consensual elite, able to control to a great extent the information that people receive about community affairs, to determine who will and who will not participate in local affairs, and to set what gets on the agenda for public discussion. That is not to say that the success of non-decision making does not occur without some complicity on the part of community residents. There is many a small towner who joins local leaderships in defining situations as non-problems in the hope of preventing structural change in the community.

Many small towns fail to respond to immediate problems until they develop into a crisis. An implicit hope of many small town decision-makers is that problems will somehow fade away or solve themselves. Or they want to see if citizens on their own initiative will solve the problems and relieve the town government of having to expand its role beyond simple maintenance of roads, police, and taxes. The likelihood of problems disapperaing of their own accord is slim. Informal citizen action varies and cannot be counted on to solve each and every community problem. Left unattended, problems fester like an open sore and grow worse--to the point where it is just impossible to pretend that problems do not exist. But as problems fester, they also become increasingly more difficult to solve. There comes a point when the problem is no longer one distinct issue, but a multitude of interrelated problems that feed on each other and defy adequate solution. Continued postponement of problems does not just delay the inevitable--it actually exacerbates the problems, so that by the time the community is willing to face up to the problem, it is now a crisis, and all the "good" solutions that existed before just are not available.

FROM NEED TO CRISIS IN ONE SMALL TOWN

The following example of the problems of the imaginary community called "Smalltown" demonstrated how needs can alter long periods of avoidance, can become crises. Smalltown happened to grow at a bend of a small country creek with headwaters 10 miles or so in the back country. Up in the hills, there was iron ore, coal, and bluestone. Quarries, foundries, coke ovens, etc. were all located next to the creek, whose water was used in some of the extractive and refining processes. Down the creek, Smalltown became the service center for the workers employed in the hills, and with the development of the railroads after the Civil War, developed a busy and attractive shopping area in its downtown, and residential districts housing nearly 2,000 people.

But prosperity has its price. As the first sign of trouble, the creek was noticeably lower in its stock of trout, a fish very sensitive to changes in the quality of water. Two things quickly became evident. First, run-offs from the mining activities in the hills, particularly the stripped coal, had caused the stream to become highly acidic, killing not only the fish but other animals and plant life too. Secondly, people who lived along the stream up in the hills and in Smalltown were dumping raw sewage and other household wastes directly into the stream, causing potentially severe health problems and definitely strong odors. The lowered quality of water demonstrated the beginning of a definite need: to halt the deterioration of the creek before irreversible damage to the town's living conditions, economic state, and community health occurred.

Sewage is not a particularly easy thing to deal with. For example, how much should regulations of polluting industries be pressed before local firms show signs of going under because of the regulatory burden? Perhaps more fundamentally, local firms enjoyed great influence in Smalltown--who would dare suggest that they curb themselves, considering their contribution to Smalltown's prosperity. Or, who would pay for sewage control in the town if only those people living along the creek were directly impacted, while those living in outlying areas were less affected. Finally, though some residents were aware of the health hazard and others were sensitive to the odors, many others discounted them as serious, and assumed that, like their forefathers, they too could exist without sewage treatment. Thus, the problem: Funding an equitable means of treating and disposing Smalltown's sewage without causing an inordinate burden to particular groups or interests in town.

The stream first began to look pink from acid and iron not long after the mechanization of mining had occurred. Those were the days of community prosperity--people were employed and money was available. But by the time of the Depression, the major firms had left, but the little strip miners and the homeowners along the creek were still dumping in as much waste as ever. Without the big firms, employment declined, and many residents moved elsewhere in search of new jobs. As residents left, so did commercial development--the banks closed, shopping was minimal--leaving a dilapidated looking downtown and deteriorating residential areas. The sewage problem remained, but the capability of the town to solve the problem was diminished. Thus, the longer sewerage remained a problem, the less and less likely were easy solutions.

With the polluted state of the stream those more affluent residents moved to higher ground, and poorer residents, many of them on welfare or "relief" moved in, finding more suitable housing within their income bracket unavailable. Thereafter, the lower income residents of Smalltown were most affected by the untreated sewage. They and other concerned residents believed sewerage to be a necessity, but the town fathers and those living on the hills were less concerned and less motivated to act. Beyond the question of who was most affected, there was also the question of who would pay for sewerage. Since municipal revenues were drawn almost solely from the property tax, homeowners would have to assume the major burden, an idea which was particularly repulsive to those who were satisfied with the septic tanks and outhouses on their properties.

Until that time, there were still a number of things that the municipality might have done to solve this provlem. There were various ways of financing a local sewerage system--raising taxes, issuing bonds, or perhaps both--but the resistance to both new taxes and the idea of a municipal debt combined with the local conflicts to stymie an effective solution. Thus Smalltown did not seem able to reach a solution, other units of government were increasingly more concerned with the raw sewage in the creek. Finally, the State's environmental office decided to force Samlltown to clean up the creek and comply with various environmental standards. But the state then said that Smalltown would have to join a number of neighboring communities in a regional sewage treatment system--at a cost to Smalltown of twenty times its annual municipal budget. Thus, the crisis: Forced to implement a comprehensive sewage system that the town cannot affod, yet cannot find external monies to fund. Had Smalltown's officials and residents acted earlier, they would have had more options to choose from. But after one postponement and then another, a need developed into a serious problem, until it finally became a crisis. At each stage, fewer and fewer solutions could have been feasibly implemented. Finally, when conflict evolved into crisis, there was little that Smalltown could do.

PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS

When problems persist unresolved, the demands of residents (or outsiders) for something to be done have a tendency to grow in intensity. Occasionally, these demands reach the point of developing into community conflict. Certainly the example of Smalltown showed plenty of potential for conflict--between the people on the hills who were physically removed from the source of the problem and the residents down by the creek who had to suffer with the pollution, between the homeowners who were already satisfied with their septic tanks and those residents who would benefit from the installation of the new sewerage system, and so on. As the problem continued without effective resolution, the conditions for conflict were magnified, as the state interceded with directives and regulations. It is a rare community that has been able to solve its more pressing problems without a bit of conflict creeping in from time to time. Since small towns are communties of people and tend to exhibit the flaws of human behavior, problem solving does not always proceed apace, and conflictful situations are considered a relatively common and expected state of affairs.

Coleman[2] points out that there are some common themes or patterns of conflict in many communities:

1) Specific issues give way to general issues: For example, when conflict erupts on some aspect of the educational system, such as teacher salaries, not long in following are criticisms of the quality of education, the size of classes, the content of school books, and probably a host of other questions.

2) New and different issues arise once the community's stability is upset: The initiation of divisive politics over one issue almost invariably spreads to other problem areas. Political

hostilities on municipal sewerage expenditures energize tensions on municipal expenditures, corruption in local government, and public employment issues. This differs from just broadening the issue, since it also awakens lingering tensions in other issues.

3) There is a shift from disagreement to antagonisms and a personalization of the issues: A conflict that began as a simple difference of solutions to a particular problem may evolve into a battle of personalities, characterized by some name-calling and personal in-fighting, during which the critical issues under discussion somehow become lost.

Many negative consequences can and sometimes do result from community conflict. The antagonisms that develop often far outlast the importance of the issues. In a small town where personalities are important, bitterness over long past conflicts shows remarkable staying power, affecting all aspects of the lives of participants.

However, conflict should not always be denounced as a negative factor, but actually may be a positive, important force for change. Gamson notes that community controversy and conflict are not necessarily indicators of community ill health, but may demonstrate strength instead:

> "Many of the conventional communities are rather dull and stagnate, while some of the most rancorous ones are among the most vital. Some of the conventional towns not only have an absence of rancorous conflict, but a general absence of change; the rancorous towns have the strains that accompany change but some of them also have the advantage of stimulation and growth. The absence of rancorous conflict is no necessary sign of an 'ideal' community."[3]

Most people feel somewhat uncomfortable when talking about conflict in the context of community improvement planning. Most try to ignore the possibility of conflict or to squelch it when it does appear. But ignoring it or maneuvering to avoid it has serious consequences. When community improvement focusses on non-controversial issues, they tend to also be the least dynamic, least important of concerns. Community improvement often requires getting to the root of problems and issues. If the price of addressing the town's fundamental problems is a higher level of controversy, then residents have to choose between substantial community improvements or non-controversial window dressing. Once into the community improvement process, squelching controversy only hardens and perpetuates existing conditions. Those advocates of opposing points of view will feel excluded, silenced, and "alienated" and most likely in the future will be persistent critics of the planned changes.

What are the positive functions of conflict? Huizer, an internationally known community development specialist, points out two important factors:[4] (1) Conflict may force people to reexamine their conceptions of community needs and problems as well as their own personal interests or "stakes" in the issues facing the town. (2) Conflict can become the inducement for innovative change, generating new ideas and possible solutions by "shaking up" previous stalemates. The traditional approach to community improvement planning (see Chapter I), which always focuses on harmony and avoids conflict, may actually overlook or, in fact, block innovation and substantial change. Certainly conflict is not always positive, as too much of it can make residents distrustful, suspicious, and sometimes overly contentious. But conflict can in many instances be a necessary and useful means of clearing the air, getting out all the issues, and articulating the variety of positions community residents may hold.

SMALL TOWN PROBLEMS

Small towners are concerned, like people all over the country, with violence, crime, inflation, drug addiction, pollution, consumer protection, and other common issues nationally.[4] Differences on these larger issues tend to occur in the way small towners may define and respond to these typical issues. But many issues are of special and important concern in small towns, though they may not be perceived as equally pressing by all small towners. Though we cannot be exhaustively comprehensive here, some of the important issues facing small towns are recounted below.

Municipal Governance: Incorporated small towns are not today the self-sufficient social units they once were or believed they were. With rising costs for traditional governmental functions, small towns are increasingly discovering an inability to meet demands for services. In addition, other governmental levels are placing more demands on small towns, mandating expenditures and enforcing regulations that the communities would not have otherwise undertaken. Furthermore, small towns do not have the indigenous talents and expertises available for them to understand the variety of programs and regulations they have to confront.

These pressures have compelled small municipalities to seek the help of other governmental units. Three patterns are typical:

1) Service agreements: Small towns will contract other public or private groups to obtain a product or service that would ordinarily come at a prohibitively high cost if provided by the municipality. Examples of this are solid waste disposal and water.[5]

2) Transfer of Functional Responsibility: Here, services that can better be provided for a larger geographic area are handled by those governmental units, relieving the small town of the burden of doing it on its own. Counties, states, and special regional governmental units are the primary beneficiaries of these functions. For example, many a small town will have its taxes collected or housing code enforced by county officials.

3) Consolidation: A third form, much less in use in non-metropolitan areas, is governmental consolidation, taking several fragmented governmental units and combining them into one large unit. Small towns have witnessed this occurring in their school systems--consolidated school districts are now practically the norm. Recent moves favor consolidation of governments into large county or multi-county units, though this has only happened in metropolitan areas, such as Indianapolis, Miami, and Toronto.

Despite the impact of current federal programs, such as revenue sharing and community development block grants, public policy has a decidedly centralized tendency. Particularly in small town areas, the direction of responsibility is upward, not downward. Respected national organizations such as the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and the Committee for Economic Development have made suggestions in favor of centralization, such as,

> "Most--if not all--of the 11,000 non-metropolitan villages with fewer than 2,500 residents should disincorporate to permit strong county governments to administer their services on a special assessment basis..."[6]

Small municipalities, in the name of modernization and efficiency, are threatened with losing their functional identities, sacrificing their responsibilities to more centralized unites of government. The resulting loss of local control has ramifications for the very existence of small towns. In the face of increasing difficulties with small town governance, residents have a difficult choice--the easy route of shifting municipal responsibilities to higher levels, and the more difficult route, finding local solutions to small town problems.

Urbanization: When people say ours is an urban society, they are not just referring to New York and Los Angeles. Towns as small as 2,500 and less are showing signs of "urbanism." Urbanization is not just a matter of the growth of towns, though that is undeniably important, but the lifestyles of towns too. America just does not have the separate agricultural society it once had. Small towners are more likley to be employed in factories or offices than they are on the farms. Even those who live in more rural settings and crossroads hamlets with as few as 10 houses watch TV, listen to the radio, and read newspapers that integrate them into a less rural lifestyle and belief system. Some aspects of urbanization are fundamentally changing the small town as we once knew it.

--Main street is now clogged with automobiles and motorcycles, a long way from the more pedestrian character of village centers in years past.

--Shopping at local haberdashers is no longer competitive with the department stores in the malls on the highway.

--The highway itself has made the 40 or 50 mile trip to the city less difficult, so that the small town has less of a hold over its residents for entertainment and shopping.

--Locally owned factories and banks are succumbing to competition, and are either forced to declare bankruptcy or sell out to larger firms--and absentee owners are noticeably less responsive to community needs than are locally owned businesses.

--Small town problems more and more begin to resemble the city: purse-snatching, breaking and entering, drugs violations, etc.

Urbanization is not necessarily a bad thing. It has many positive aspects, for instance, in opening the horizons of small towners to other ways of life, introducing innovation to tradition-bound communities, and in cases improving the quality of life in small towns. But this is happening largely without much input or control by small towners. In general, urbanization happens to the small town--it is a rare case where the small town consciously urbanizes on its own initiative. The opportunities for urbanization are there. But does the small town really want to become "citified?" What can it do to protect what is "small" about the small town, while guaranteeing a high quality of life for its residents? Does the small town even know how smallness makes it special?

In-Migration: Many Americans think they know what makes small towns special, so much so that there is now an overwhelming preference expressed by most Americans that they would like to live in a small town environment. The sudden upsurge of interest in small town living is reflected in a major new trend--people in the cities are moving back to small towns. For towns that are located at the fringe of metropolitan areas, this is an especially serious concern--how to accommodate the influx of new residents, providing adequate schools, water, sewerage, etc., while maintaining an existence as a small town? In other words, how can, or possibly, should, the small town resist suburbanization? The attempt to suburbanize small towns, combining rural country living with urban amenities, Kohr terms "minced meat and peas," a poor blend of both cities and towns into suburbs, "destroying the essence of each."[7]

Part of the problem of the return to the small town is the image the new in-migrants hold of small towns. In most cases, people mythologize and idealize the small town, attributing qualities to it that are inaccurate. Two predominant images are those of a nineteenth century Iowa farm community and a rural New England village--few of which still exist. Small towns continue to survive in the twentieth century in part because they have progressed along with the rest of society and have found useful purposes and roles to play. Small towns are a part of today, and should not by mythologized as a remnant of yesteryear. Small towns find themselves in a delicate position. Refugees from the cities, either searching for a return to nineteenth century America, or just reacting against the tumult of the cities, are moving into small towns, bringing with them new ideas, lifestyles, and needs. Small towners will both have to understand the dimensions of community that they want to protect, and educate outsiders to respect and support what it is that makes a small town unique and valuable.

Poverty: Those who return to small towns are often shocked by the poverty and squalor found in little pockets outside metropolitan areas. We are accustomed to scenes of riot-scarred urban areas, replete with abandoned tenement housing and visible unemployment. It comes as a surprise unfortunately even to many small towners, that poverty is widespread outside the city as well. For the city-dweller, the small town connotes visions of Main Street and picket fences, not shacks on hillsides or riverbanks, except in Appalachia or the Ozarks. For small towners themselves, these are facts that they often strive to ignore, the unpleasant realities of their own mythologized images of their communities.

It is not merely Appalachia that contains the small town's poverty. Vidich and Bensman's study[8] of an Upstate New York town calls the poor "shack people," and describes how they were systematically overlooked in community affairs. The invisibility of the small town poor is not all that difficult to understand. Twenty-five welfare-dependent families in a town of 500 households are less noticeable than the nearly one out of every five in some large cities. In many small towns, the proportion of poverty line families may be even greater than that of cities, but in absolute numbers, the 100 poor people in Smalltown are a minute speck compared to the hundreds of thousands in New York City, Chicago, or St. Louis. When grouped together, many powerless people, such as the urban poor, realize that they can exercise a latent power--the power of numbers. By making noise and causing turbulence, the urban poor have achieved victories that the best intentions of social reformers have not been able to achieve.[9] The lack of numbers of the small town poor means that they are less likely to be heard or seen, and were they to undertake actions similar to the urban poor, more likely to be effectively suppressed. Their powerlessness is reinforced by the sanction of many small town values, in particular, self-reliance. Small towners are frequently hesitant to admit to their poverty and seek the help of government welfare agencies. Worse yet, governmental agencies in non-metropolitan areas have traditionally seemed less willing or capable of addressing the needs of small town poor, and as a result, the poor have frequently left for the cities, not only because of better job possibilities there, but because of the cities' more generous provision of welfare supplements and other aid for the poor.[10] Except in cases where the federal government intervened to address widespread rural poverty, such as the formation of the Tennessee

Valley Authority in the '30's, the Appalachian Regional Commission in the '60's, and certain multi-county districts under the Area Redevelopment Administration and later the Economic Development Administration, the small town poor have never received the attention and in-depth program help that has been accorded, albeit insufficiently, the urban poor.

PROBLEM SOLVING - A PERSPECTIVE

At a glance, the roles of the four dimensions of community are apparent in these and other community problems. Values and beliefs are the cornerstone of the mythology of small towns, the unrealistic images held by outsiders coming into communities and the self-deceiving visions of those who actually live there. Power and social structure combine to prevent the poor from articulating their needs and improving their social positions. The economic impact of urbanization is clear as local firms give way to absentee-owned factories and department stores, with headquarters in metropolitan areas far away. Many of the activist small towners, those agitating for community improvement or rectification of social injustices, are beginning to recognize and grapple with these conditions. The interplay of these dimensions points to a small town that is more complex than most people have traditionally assumed. But what have small towns done in the past in dealing with community problems, and what was wrong with it? Small towns are varied. and so are their approaches to community problems. There is no one method that can be definitively identified. But a few commonalities crop up again and again, and are worth noting, as follows.

Most people, whether private citizens, public officials, or professional community change agents, have little appreciation for the complexity of the small town. Its smallness is frequently equated with simplicity, and as such, the small town is believed to be "solvable" by good common sense thinking. Generally, according to this belief, the small town is a healthy social animal in its normal state, and problems can be understood and treated as minor illnesses, deviations from a healthy norm. In effect, the small town is perceived much like a biological animal, working on impulses and immediate feedback. An appropriate metaphor is Forrester's example of warming one's hands next to the stove. The desire is to get near the source of heat, but avoid getting burnt.[11] Upon getting too close to the stove where one feels a burning sensation, or moving away from the stove where cold starts to creep in, the changes in temperature produce immediate sensations that are "fed back" to the brain in order to find the happy medium between heat and cold. Many people feel that small towns are not all that different, that the small town provides the immediate feedback necessary for successful short range planning and analysis. In part, the belief that all deviations from the norm can be addressed by quick, short range analysis and solution, ignores the probability that the small town, unlike the human hand, does not immediately reveal all the causes of its malfunctioning.

How are community problems normally handled in the small town? Residents and decision-makers, believing the small town to be a relatively simple social setting, assume that problems are only temporary disorders that can be readily solved through common sense intuition. If the problem is one of dilapidated housing, the solution is to tear the slum area down. If the problem is seen in the guise of unemployment, the short-range solution is job-training, regardless of the state of the economy and the avilability of jobs in and around the community. Thinking in these simple terms, coming up with intuitive answers to problems, finds small towners treating the symptoms of problems without ever delving deeper into the more fundamental causes and implications of the problem. Where the problem of finding the right temperature for keeping one's hands warm is intuitively a matter of distance from the stove, the causes of poverty, poor housing, unemployment, and many other small town phenomena have no such easy answers. According to Forrester,[12] "in the complex system the cause of a difficulty may lie far back in time from the symptoms, or in a completely different and remote part of the system. In fact, causes are usually found, not in prior events, but in the structure and policies of the system."

Where the conventional solutions fail is in their relevance to meeting the challenge of long-range problems. Almost automatically, decision-makers assume that the "simplicity" of the small town social system allows for the selection of the easiest, most immediate "textbook" solution. The motivation is unchallengeable--what could be wrong with a sincere desire to solve a community problem? The error is in the approach. Small town pragmatism combined with well-motivated impulses "...lead to programs whose benefits, if any, evaporate quickly, leaving behind a system that is unimproved or in worse condition."[13] If small towners intuitively reach the easiest, the simplest, and the erroneous conclusions of traditional problem solving approaches, then perhaps Forrester is correct when he suggests that intuitive reasoning be replaced with counterintuitive analysis--what is required is the application of a methodology to study the four dimensions of a small town social system.

The alternative involves studying and directly dealing with the more intricate complexities of the small town. The four dimensions of the small town--the local economy, the social structure, patterns of influence and decision-making, and cultural moves and values--are the elements of the complexity that so often frustrate and defeat more simplistic, intuitive approaches. Merely describing the four dimensions does not immediately reveal the "correct" solution to a community problem. In reality, the complexity of small towns is not just due to the existence of the four dimensions of community, but to the variety of ways in which the dimensions are related and interact. It is in the interrelationships among community dimensions that Forrester's notion of counterintuitive problem solving comes into play. What appears to be an obvious solution on the surface can be exposed as inadequate by delving deeper into these interrelationships. Examples of the interrealtionships of the four dimensions are abundant, both in the literature and by observation:

Examples of the interrelationships of the four dimensions are abundant, both in the literature and by observation:

--The occupational structure of the local economy is a strong determinant of the shape of the social structure[14]--the more diversified the local economy, the more complex the social structure;[15]

--The indicators of social status--the big car, the fancy home in a nice part of town, membership in elite clubs--are themselves manifestations of commonly held values,[16] which identify certain symbols as desirable, "classy," and prestigious;

--The social structure itself is a repository and generator of values--the prevailing values are most commonly those of the upper classes, and are frequently accepted and internalized by those below;[17]

--A common finding is that those residents who dominate a town's local economy also dominate its patterns of power and influence in local decision-making;[18]

--The strong role of economic firms has also nurtured a set of values in the small town that support free enterprise and private ownership, causing many quick denunciations by small towners of government intervention and incentives, even when they would be in their own best interests;

--Values certainly override economic logic in some instances: for example, whether continued community growth is good or bad, or whether a particular kind of industry is desirable or not, both questions answered more on the basis of values other than income and profitability;

These interrelationships, and innumerable others, would not be half so complex if it were not for one important factor: they do not always work harmoniously. There are many instances where cultural values may conflict with economic rationality, where political elites may conflict with social elites, or even cases where values themselves are contradictory, or when the local economy's own actions undermine its long term prosperity. Rather than four harmoniously working dimensions, they are frequently fraught with contradictions and conflicts. In many cases, it is these contraditions that are the source of innumerable community problems; if it were not for the contradictions among dimensions that complicate so many matters, small towners might still be able to rely on intuitive solutions.

A PROBLEM OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS - HOUSING IN SMALLTOWN

The example of sewage treatment in Smalltown was, as in most towns, only one of many issues facing the community. Another pressing problem happened to be the condition of housing in the town. In the downtown area, a number of ramshackle wood-frame houses next to the creek and some visibly deteriorating brick apartment houses along the main street contributed to a generally shabby, run-down image of Smalltown. Low income families and elderly pensioners occupied these properties, if they were occupied at all. Though almost everyone seemed to focus on the downtown eyesores, a few residents were aware that the bulk of the housing elsewhere in Smalltown was none too good. Four of every five homes had been constructed before 1940, and their age was beginning to show in the increasing frequency and costs of regular maintenance. New housing construction had virtually halted inside the municipality, though an area outside of town near the highway had become the site for a half dozen new homes. The failure to build was forcing young, growing families to look for new housing in communities other than Smalltown.

Background: Numerous people were concerned about the state of Smalltown's housing, though their motivations differed. Some residents who desired a more "spruced up" Smalltown suggested that the government adopt a "property maintenance code," defining standards of upkeep that all homeowners and landlords had to obey. Others proposed programs to get rid of the dilapidated housing in the downtown area, though among some people the intent was less eliminating the housing than the people who lived there. Still others were aware of various government housing construction or rehabilitation programs. The number of residents with the experience and skill to tap these resources was practically nil. Over the years, townspeople and local officials would raise the issue of what to do about the town's housing repeatedly without ever coming to a resolution. The seemingly simple answers for the problem were continually confounded by its complex interrelations among the four dimensions of the town's social ecology.

Social Structure: Suppose Smalltown decided either to enforce a property maintenance code or to condemn property that was declared dilapidated beyong repair. With the former policy, all homeowners would have to meet the new standards, regardless of their finanacial ability to do so. As a result, low income homeowners or elderly homeowners dependent on fixed incomes might not be able to find the means to fix their properties "up to code," and might have to sell out to outsiders. The effect would be to eliminate a whole class of homeowners. But, if Smalltown's village fathers, in recognition of this, decided to make low interest loans available to those least able to afford the financial burden of the new code, those homeowners above that income level might feel discriminated against as a class. In the case of demolition of downtown properties, the impact would be felt hardest by those residents who are displaced in the process--the low income households and the retired couples. Smalltown would look better as a result of tearing down the eyesores, but the spruced up image would be achieved at the expense of that class of people who most desperately need low cost housing and are usually hard pressed to find suitable replacement quarters.

Local Economy: It might be difficult to justify expenditures for new housing in an area where the economy was declining and showing no signs of a turn around. Bankers in the county's larger towns often said that mortgage financing from their banks would be easier for home in other towns than a $10,000 home in Smalltown, regardless of the credit-worthiness of the potential homeowners. This form of "redlining" --declaring a neighborhood or town as a bad investment risk based on criteria other than the character or income of the potential mortgage recipient--placed Smalltown residents at an unfair disadvantage, since if one wanted to and were able to invest in Smalltown, the banks were not going to help. Since the economy was enmired in a state of semi-permanent depression, the bankers did not feel that they could risk their money on properties in a run-down town that might in fact cause their investments to decline instead of rise in value. As bankers interested in getting a return on their investments above the cost of construction, rent and property values of Smalltown's housing, already very low, seemed too low to warrant their funds when investments elsewhere in the county could bring higher rents, higher new home sales figures, and higher and more stable returns to the cost-conscious mortgage bankers.

Patterns of Decision-Making and Influence: The fact that in Smalltown most of the proposed housing solutions did not benefit the low income population and in some instances forced a larger burden on that group points to the dimension of decision-making and influence--the poor did not have the resources, the influence, or the organization to make their needs known, and consequently were left out of the housing planning process. Among the remaining groups in Smalltown who had a voice in local affairs, housing still posed problems of governance and decision. Who would establish the criteria for the housing code--the town council or a special appointed council of citizens? Who would be authorized to certify which houses were or were not "up to code"--a building inspector with ties to local officials, with ties to the town's major landlords or building contractors, or with no ties at all to influence him? Should the town council be allowed to expand its authority by sponsoring new housing programs, or should it be left to the private sector? If new public housing were built with government assistance, who would decide which families would be admitted into the new apartments? All these questions demonstrate how integrally new housing development was related to issues of governance and decision-making.

Cultural Norms and Values: Permeating all these considerations seem to be the values and beliefs of Smalltown's residents. The discomfort many felt about the downtown area was not just the substandard housing conditions, but the lifestyles of the inhabitants of those properties. The opposition many felt toward the town council sponsoring housing development was not just an evaluation of the municipality's administrative competence, but a belief that the role of government must be minimal and that wherever possible functions should be left to the private sector. Even the issue of housing style reflected the system of values held by Smalltown's residents. Though modest apartments and "cluster" development would have been the most economically feasible housing option for Smalltown, most residents imagined new housing to be suburban-style homes, an unattainable goal for most of them, but one that they would not relinquish. In their culture, new housing meant not an apartment, but a new single-family detached home.

Paradoxes: The resolution of Smalltown's housing was not an easy, intuitive matter. The interrelationships among the various dimensions of the community's social ecology complicated and frustrated the simple answers that said "do x" or "do y". Any action to address the problem of housing--whether a property maintenance code, a slum clearance program, or a new construction program--reverberated throughout Smalltown's social structure, local economy, patterns of influence, and cultural norms. Further complicating the matter was the paradoxical nature of all of the solutions. On one hand, the community wanted to improve housing conditions. On the other, it was bound by ethics and law to try to be fair to all classes in the town. Together they amounted to two mutually exclusive goals--on face value, achieving all of one goal might prevent the full attainment of the other. For each of the possible solutions, some residents seemed to be disadvantaged and had to bear the burden of the improvement of the town. To avoid disadvantaging anyone, the town would have had to have given up its plans for improvement and accepted a "do nothing" attitude, which in the end disadvantages everyone. When Smalltown finally acted, it had recognized that the chosen solution for the housing problem would not be considered best by all quarters. Rather, all it could do is to prepare itself to make tradeoffs--sacrificing a little bit of both goals so that the town could achieve the bulk of each. With a limited demolition program, a moderate code, and a small housing rehabilitation effort, Smalltown chose to trade off some possible housing improvements in order to minimize the social burdens of some groups. Yet a few residents were disadvantaged, and Smalltown acknowledged their problems by trying to provide adequate compensation for their losses--relocation expenses for uprooted renters, fair market price compensation for demolished homes, grants and low interest loans for homeowners to use in property maintenance, and full participation by all social groups in the administration of the housing rehab program.

PARADOXES AND TRADEOFFS

That example is not all that far-fetched. What is evident is that in this case, like many others, there are often two or more equally appealing but mutually exclusive goals in mind. There is rarely the clear-cut right and wrong that intuitive thinking would like to see in small town problem solving. What is actually involved is more like a paradox--mutually opposing, but fundamentally interrelated sides of a problem. One of the most common paradoxes involves who makes decisions and how they are made. On one hand, most small towners subscribe to the democratic ideal of participatory democracy, that is, participation in governmental decision-making processes is in and of itslef a worthwhile objective, expression of political freedom. However, at the same time, many small towners strive to keep their communities harmonious[19] and peaceful. Conflict threatens to disrupt the status quo of those who are comfortable with present conditions, while it makes those who agitate for change feel like deviants and destroyers in the face of the conservative small town life style. Yet participation by its very nature is likely to engender more disagreement and contention than would the absence of participation. Public meetings characterized by large turnouts are almost certainly going to contain a greater diversity or range of viewpoints than smaller groups. Asking for citizen participation requires a tolerance and willingness to accept and endure community conflict as residents battle each other's viewpoints through the medium of the democratic process. If the choice is popular participation as a community goal, then harmony has to suffer a bit.

What can a small town do about paradoxical community problems? They cannot be ignored since they permeate many of the most fundamental of small town problems. They cannot be intuitively answered because their complexity defies simple solutions. Intuitive thinking assumes that there is an answer to every problem, whether it is moving one's hand away from the stove because of the heat, or solving some larger community problem. This vexing issue--how do we resolve paradoxical small town situations--is just one more instance where the idea of counterintuitive thinking is important. Unlike intuitive problem solving, in counterintuitive analysis, there is no one answer to fundamentally paradoxical small town problems. When facing two equally attractive but mutually exclusive goals, who is to say definitively that goal A is more worthwhile than goal B? That is in the nature of the paradox--the choices between mutually exclusive goals do not come easy or without cost. In philosopher Hook's words, "...we pay a price for any alternative, even the best. The price in the concrete situation is always the sacrifice or abridgement of some right or good which politically innocent minds fancy absolute."[20] In other words, the choice between two equally attractive goals has to involve some measure of disappointment and incompleteness, for in a paradox, it is not possible to achieve the best of both worlds in all problem solutions.

What does this mean for community improvement planning? One important point to note is that when facing the paradoxes of small town problems, there are no sure-fire solutions, but rather trade-offs--accepting a loss of some of one community goal in order to achieve some portion of another goal. Trade-offs rarely satisfy all parties. Some people and groups are bound to feel that their special concerns were short-changed so that the goals of other groups could be achieved. That is why so often problems once they have been "solved" tend to reappear with new demands and needs being voiced by various community groups.

If trade-offs never fully resolve paradoxes, and if final decisions are never really perfect resolutions, each community decision is bound to be incomplete--it will answer some problems, but let others go untouched, or even reveal other unanticipated problems. In other words, in community improvement planning, one never reaches a final state where the town is for once and all time "improved." Community improvement planning is a continuing process of addressing some problems, and facing the new problems created by the responses to previous ones. The alternative is to submit to the complexity of paradoxes and let the course of events flow where they may. In that case, the flow may well go backward instead of forward. Only through continually addressing paradoxical community problems, recognizing that the task of community improvement does not end in complacent self-satisfaction, can small towns hope to overcome the problems they face.

The utility of the four dimensions of small towns is especially important once one recognizes the paradoxical nature of small town problems. Lacking one certain answer to most fundamental prob lems, small towners have to adjust themselves to a process of continuous problem-solving. This is where the four dimensions come into play--as counter-intuitive notions of what makes the community "tick":

1) An understanding of the four dimensions of the small town helps small towners reach a more in-depth knowledge of the intracacies of their community. Residents are often very surprised by what they discover about their community. The information gathered from census reports and systematic observation, as described in the preceding four chapters, should help people ward off rash solutions proposed in ignorance of the less than obvious dimensions of a small town.

2) By studying the small town in this fashion, and describing the workings of the social structure, local economy, patterns of influence, and cultural norms, residents and decision-makers can get a clearer notion of both the choices they face and the possible ramifications of each decision. Only by digging into the structure of the town can one see the real-life options and impacts unfold, challenging previously held ideas about the implications of various actions. A better understanding of these dimensions also reveals more ideas on what might be done, ideas that might not be readily apparent to seat-of-the-pants analysis.

3) Given that no one solution is the perfect solution, problems are inevitably going to arise in the future. By identifying and describing community dimensions, residents are better able to watch the impacts of their decisions and monitor new problems as they arise. What this does is to help small towners keep pace with community problems by recognizing them when they first appear on the scene, not after they have already caused disruption and disagreement. An understanding of these dimensions helps small towners catch problems before they get out of hand.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, Power and Poverty (Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 44.

[2] William Gamson, "Rancorous Conflict in Community Politics," American Sociologist (1966), p. 31.

[3] Gerrit Huizer, "The Utilization of Conflict in Community Development and Peasant Organization: A Case From Chile," International Review of Community Development (No. 27-28, Summer, 1972) pp. 133-148.

[4] William Watts and Lloyd A. Free, State of the Nation (Universe Books, 1973), pp. 314-315.

[5] Joseph F. Zimmerman, "Financial Relief for Municipalities: The Upward Shift of Financial Responsibilities" (paper presented at the 1975 National Conference on Public Administration, Chicago, Illinois, April 3, 1975) pp. 1 and 4-5.

[6] Committee for Economic Development, Modernizing Local Government (Committee for Economic Development, July, 1966), p. 42.

[7] Leopold Kohr, "Small City," Resurgence (Vol. 5, No. 4, Sept./ Oct., 1974), p. 28.

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[9] Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, The Politics of Turmoil (Pantheon Books, 1965), pp. 47-8.

[10] The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1968 noted the range of welfare payments between urban states and rural areas as one of the causes of the influx of the poor into central city ghettos. For example, at that time, the monthly payments per recipient from Aid to Families with Dependent Children ranged from $9.30 in Missisippi to $62.55 in New York. Cf. pp. 252-3.

[11] Jay W. Forrester, Urban Dynamics (MIT Press, 1969), p. 9.

[12] Ibid. p. 9.

[13] Ibid. p. 10

[14] William H. Form and Delbert C. Miller Industry, Labor, and Community (Harper and Brothers, Inc., 1960), p. 47.

[15] James M. Beshers: "Urban Social Structure," in Murray Stewart, ed. The City (Penguin Books, 1972), p. 185.

[16] Ibid., p. 186.

[17] Herbert W. Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes--A social Psychological Contribution to the Analysis of Stratification," in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour M. Lipset eds., Culture, Status, and Power (The Free Press, 1953), pp. 426-432.

[18] Cf. Robert Presthus, Men at the Top (Oxford University Press, 1964) p. 411.

[19] Robert E. Agger, Daniel Goldrich, and Bert E. Swanson, The Ruler and the Ruled (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 260-262.

[20] Sidney Hook, The Paradoxes of Freedom (The University of California Press, 1962), p. 16.

Glossary

prepared by Edith Swanson

GLOSSARY

ACTIVIST:	One who takes initiative in community affairs beyond voting.
ADMINISTRATIVE:	Concerned with the implementation of policy within the limits or rules specified by that policy.
AMENITIES:	Pleasantries, conveniences, and contributions toward comfort and aesthetics made in the community once baseline conditions for survival (e.g., water and sewage) are met.
ATTENUATED FAMILY:	A family with only one parent and one or more children.
ATTITUDE:	A disposition reflected in the general state of readiness to react to something rather consistently in a certain kind of favorable or unfavorable way.
AUTHORITY:	A legally or formally vested power to make decisions and to enforce them, often in binding ways.
BALANCE OF TRADE:	The relationship between payments owed for merchandise and services bought by a person, household, community, or other group and payments claimed for merchandise and services sold.
BARGAINING:	A process of negotiation in which those involved attempt to reach agreement wherein the concessions or favors given by one party are compensated by those given by others.
BELIEF:	A predisposition to respond in a preferential way to the object of that belief. Beliefs may describe an object or situation as true or false, evaluate it as good or bad, or advocate it as desirable or undesirable. Beliefs involve a person's knowledge and feelings and, when challenged, will often lead to some sort of action.
CAUSALITY:	The hooking together of events in terms of cause and effect, so that one or more events occur before others do and also bring them about. The fact that two events are correlated or related (e.g., that small towns are associated with the lower per capita incomes) does not mean that one factor has caused the other.

CITIZEN:	A member of a nation, state, or municipality who enjoys the protection of its laws and owes allegiance to its government.
COERCION:	To use force or punishment, whether visibly or invisibly, to get someone to act or behave in a certain way.
COMMUNITY:	A group of people sharing a limited physical area in which they carry out at least some important daily activities, such as eating, sleeping, child-rearing, participation in clubs and groups, etc.
COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE:	The ability of a community, business firm, or other entity to provide a product or service more cheaply or in better fashion than can other communities, firms, etc.
COMPETITION:	The pursuit of goals by two or more persons, groups, communities, or other entities under conditions such that the achievement of a goal by one group usually prevents its achievement by the others.
COMPLEMENTARY INDUSTRIES:	The presence in a community or other setting of industries or in the functioning of one enhances or makes possible the functioning of the other. Thus, the industry of a saw mill and the industry of making wooden toys from the product produced by that saw mill are complementary.
COMPROMISE:	The settlement of a disagreement reached by mutual adjustments or concessions by those involved. Bargaining is often a method used for reaching compromise which is often used in communities to settle controversies.
CONFLICT:	Behavior of two or more persons, groups, or communities in relation to each other such that an objective of each group is to stop, injure, eliminate, or in other ways harm the other.
CONSENSUS:	Opinion, thoughts, or feelings that are in general agreement among those involved. Consensus may be a baseline tradition (e.g., people just naturally agree) or may be consciously brought about in a planned way (e.g., broadening a decision made so that there is something in it for everybody and they will agree to it).

CONSUMPTION:	The use of goods and services. Consumption and its end product, waste, are important means of measuring the total activity of an individual, family, or community.
CONTROVERSY:	Arguments or disagreements among individuals or organizations who differ in their assumptions about something, about a problem or issue, or what should be done about it. Controversy is generally thought to be stronger than mere disagreement and yet not as strong as conflict, which often results in controversies if not resolved.
COOPERATION:	Pursuit of goals by two or more persons, groups, or communities under conditions where achieving the goal by one person or group helps the others also to achieve that goal.
COOPERATIVES:	Voluntary organizations engaged in an economic or social activity which is started, owned, and directed by those persons who together will share in the benefits. People who are part of a cooperative, such as a food cooperative, often believe that one or more middle men are cut out.
CRITERION (plural: CRITERIA):	Standards for judgment...established rules by which something can be measured and/or evaluated (e.g., a criterion for a small town's getting a grant from the federal government for a given purpose might be that the community contribute 50% of the total cost).
CULTURE:	The concepts, habits, skills, institutions, etc. of a given people in a given period which result in certain patterns of behavior and material products; similar to civilization.
DECISION MAKING:	The process of defining issues, problems, and/or options to be taken in such a way that the decision between or among alternatives is made; decision making in communities is often an on-going process of interaction involving both official leaders and many residents.
DEMOCRACY:	The opportunity for the members of a given unit (e.g., a society or community) to participate freely and with effect in the decisions which affect their lives. The term often includes both direct democracy in which individuals represent their own interests and representative democracy in which we elect certain people to represent our interests in government.

DIMENSIONS:	Factors which make up a whole. Thus, values, power and influence, land-use patterns, and such differences in status as those provided by education and income are dimensions of a community.
DISTRIBUTION:	The process and end result of getting goods and services to consumers. One aspect is the marketing and transportation of goods and services to people. Another is how those goods and services get apportioned among the members of a community or society.
DIVERSIFIED:	Made up of many rather than few kinds of elements. Thus, a diversified economy in a small town is one made up of different kinds of activities and not just one or two businesses or industries.
DOMINATE:	To exercise clear influence over someone or something (e.g., a rule) in such a way that control is total and often highly arbitrary.
DOCTRINE:	A law or principle accepted by a group of people who believe in it as a philosophy or school of thought. Thus, the concept that small towns are either valuable to our future or a thing of the past are both doctrines, which are associated with different people who believe in each of them.
ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION:	To make a distinction (often a negative one) against a person or group on the basis of its race, religion, or national origin rather than according to any measures, actual merit, or performance.
DYNAMICS:	The pattern of change, growth, evolution, decline, or other form of change on an individual, community, or societal level. Many things which are thought to be static (e.g., unchanging) when viewed from a distance are in reality dynamic, even in the most stable of small towns.
ECONOMIES OF SCALE:	The principle that the average cost per unit of output produced declines as the size of an organization increases until, at some point, the unit cost increases. Thus, the more cars, televisions, or hamburgers a firm sells, the lower, presumably, the cost of each unit. Recent interest in smallness, whether small business, small communities, or small tools, suggests that there are often corresponding economies of small scale which industrialization has tended to hide.

ELITES:	A term used to define or to indicate those individuals at the "top of the heap"--such as those who with a higher status (such as based on social standing, income, education) or those who get to make or enforce most decisions (e.g., the political elites). The notion of elite implies that even in the most democratic of situations there are usually those who have more of whatever is valued than do others.
ENTREPRENEUR:	A person who initiates and develops new organizations or institutions under conditions of high risk.
EXTERNALITIES:	The by-products or spill-over effects, whether desired or not, of activities which affect others. Thus, the pollution experienced downstream caused by the manufacturing plant dumping wastes into the water upstream is an externality affecting residents downstream.
EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY:	Industries which obtain products directly from the land or water, including farming, lumbering, mining, quarrying, and fishing. It is important to differentiate in extractive industries which take renewable resources (such as plants and lumber) and those which extract non-renewable or unreplaceable resources (such as minerals).
FEDERAL SYSTEM:	A form of government in which authority is shared between a central overall administration and state, regional, or other forms of local government.
FORM:	The configuration or shape of something such that its boundary is distinct from its environment. Form gives meaning and structure to what might appear to be random or irregular occurrences. Thus, the grouping of a number of houses together is understood by the form called community or town.
GHETTO:	Any area in a city or small town inhabited by a poor or minority group in which living conditions are clearly substandard at a survival level. Ghetto living can be voluntary, to the extent that individuals prefer to live "with their own kind" or compulsory, to the extent that residents are not accepted or cannot afford housing elsewhere.
GOAL:	An end result or state towards which effort is directed, often seen as a long-range ideal.

HARMONIOUS:	Co-existence of feelings, thoughts, or actions which are thought to be either the same or highly compatible so that no disruption results. Harmony can exist either at a symbolic level (e.g., small towners often say that residents live in harmony with each other) or at a very specific and testable level (e.g., two families live together year after year in the same house within a small town).
HETEROGENEOUS:	People, groups, or other elements who differ fundamentally or in kind. Thus, residents of a small town with different backgrounds, values, opinions, or vocations would form a heterogeneous community.
HINTERLAND:	Applied to regions and areas lying beyond the boundaries of cities or metropolitan areas, yet which relate to those urban places in a systematic, ongoing way.
HOMOGENEOUS:	The quality of being of a similar kind or nature. Often, however, what appears to be homogeneous at a first and general look proves to be much more diverse and heterogeneous the closer one examines it.
HUMAN ECOLOGY:	The patterns of how people settle and use the land and develop upon it social and cultural processes.
IDEOLOGY:	Beliefs, attitudes, and opinions such that a coherent and regular pattern of thinking in an individual or group emerges. Ideology is usually applied to more fundamental and important aspects of life. Thus, one might be said to have an ideology governing political events or human relationships, but an opinion about preferences for one breakfast cereal over another.
IMAGE:	A mental picture or map of a place based upon what an individual brings to bear when he "looks." Thus, memories, associations with other things, and preconceptions all play a role in what one's image of a small town is.
INFLUENCE:	The ability of a person, group, or other organization to convince another to behave in a way that the first party prefers or desires. Influence is thus the exercise of power.

INFRASTRUCTURE:	The underlying foundation of physical (roads, sewage, water) and social (education, welfare, etc.) services upon which the economic and social development of a community or nation depends.
INSTITUTION:	A significant practice, relationship, or organization in a society or a community, generally valued by the society for more than just the services or benefits institutions provide; usually, institutions are connected to the stability of societal or community functions.
INTERDEPENDENCE:	The mutual need of individuals, groups, or institutions for support, supply, and service such that each group depends upon others and in turn is depended upon by others.
INFLUENTIAL:	A term used by social scientists to designate an individual who plays a significant role in making a decision. Influentials are those people who over the course of time tend to have more than their share of power to get their way.
LEADERSHIP:	That role in a group or community referring to the coordination and/or concentration of influence exerted to make decisions and take planned change actions. Leadership can be concentrated (e.g., one leader) or it can be shared (e.g., many people provide leadership in areas in which they have special interest or knowledge).
LEGITIMACY:	The belief of a group of residents or citizens that a government, law or other institutions has the weight of precedent and rule and that the citizen or resident ought to obey that rule or precedent because it is legitimate.
LINKAGE:	A connection or bridge between elements within a group or community or between them. For example, the federal system provides linkage between local governments, state governments, and the national government. Similarly, most small towns have linkages of varying strength to urban centers.
MOBILIZATION:	The condition of involving and energizing a widespread group of citizens to take action on a certain issue or problem in a concentrated organized fashion.

MULTIPLIER:	The way in which an increase or decrease in the strength of one factor causes effects in others. For example, if an increase in one manufacturing job stimulates the creation of three service jobs, then the multiplier is one-to-three.
MUNICIPAL BUDGET:	The community's formal written estimate of income and expenses for a future period, usually one year. The budget provides important information on the sources of local government income and, just as important, a reflection on the priorities for allocating public funds as determined in the political process.
NEGOTIATION:	Communications, often direct, between two or more parties who are in dispute in order to settle differences and conclude an agreement to which all parties will subscribe.
NON-PARTISAN:	This adjective refers to the lack of formal political party labels and, ideally, influences. Thus, a non-partisan election is one in which candidates do not run as Republics, Democrats, or even Independents.
NORM:	A shared understanding in a community or group of what is correct and incorrect behavior in many common given situations. Norms are often built upon shared beliefs and values.
NUCLEAR FAMILY:	The basic unit of family organization, which includes both parents and their children by birth or adoption. (The nuclear family is thus differentiated from the extended family which can include aunts, uncles, grandparents, and others who are biologically related, yet not "nuclear.")
OBJECTIVE (noun):	A specific aim or target, usually specified in order to answer the question "If this project or activity is successful, just what will have been achieved?". Generally, objectives are specific and short range with many objectives to be completed before a more general long-term goal is reached.

OBJECTIVE (adjective):	Something based upon fact as opposed to opinion or preference. For example, an objective indicator or status or prestige accorded to individuals might be the level of their income. Oftentimes subjective information (such as opinions given to pollsters) is treated in highly objective fashion--but the basic subjective nature of the information is important to bear in mind.
PARADOX:	A statement, proposition or understanding which seemingly is self-contradictory or even absurd but which, in reality, may express an important truth or reality.
PARTICIPATION:	The taking part in decision making in communities, societies and other groups by political leaders and members of the public. The most common form of political participation in the United States is voting. Many citizens go beyond voting to more active forms of participation, such as working more directly in political campaigns, lobbying groups, or other special interest organizations.
PERSUADE:	To win over, not by force, a person to a certain course of action. Persuasion can be rational as in the case of logical reasoning or irrational as in the case of emotional appeals for funds and help.
POLICY:	The intended purposes, mechanisms, and guidelines by which programs are carried out in groups, communities, and the nation. Policies are usually long-range commitments for which more immediate programs can vary greatly. The actual results of public programs may not achieve what was intended in policy, however, and even produce results contradictory to the stated policy.
POLITICAL PARTY:	A group which shares general political or decision-making issues and which selects and puts forward candidates for election.
POLITICS:	Those processes of human action by which decision affecting many people get made. Political issues almost always involve distinction and tension between the "common good" and the interests of groups and individuals at a more private level. Politics involves the use of or struggle for influence or power, often defined in terms of control over the vital resources needed to get one's way in a given setting.

POWER:	The extent to which a person or group can impose its will upon others. Power is evident in a small town in any situation when one group or person gets others to do what it wants.
PRAGMATIC:	Believing or acting in terms of practical consequences of belief or action. The pragmatist is concerned with a sense of what will work, often with no regard for theory or even consistency.
PRESTIGE:	The respect or honor enjoyed by individuals or groups in a community or other setting on the basis of their property, lineage, occupation, education, income, influence, or whatever else might be admired within a community.
PRINCIPLE:	A comprehensive and basic law or rule.
PRODUCTION:	The process of creating goods and services through the translation of resources (money, raw materials, labor) into products (goods and services) which are desired and/or needed.
PROGRESSIVE TAX:	Tax whose rate increases as income increases. Thus, a progressive tax might assess a person with an income of $5,000 at 10% levy (e.g., $500) but assess a person with an income of $10,000, $2,000 (e.g., 20%). A progressive tax is associated with the idea of income redistribution--helping to redistribute money from those who have more through a higher tax to those who have less through a lower one.
PUBLIC INTEREST:	Concern for the general welfare of all the people in a community, state, or nation. Although many people talk of the public interest, it is very difficult to pin down and, in many instances, may not exist at all. That is, different people have such different ideas of the public interest that what in reality we have is many different private interests, each of which compete for the primacy of their expression.
QUALITY OF LIFE:	The quality of the human experience as judged both by environmental factors (e.g., degree of pollution, overcrowding, housing, adequacy of health care, etc.) and personality factors (e.g., sense of happiness, frustration, disappointments, fulfillments, etc.).
"RANK AND FILE":	Those below the level of top leadership in a given group or organization, including business, the community, the church, or virtually any other institution.

RATIO:	A numerical relationship comparing the size of two units or entities. Thus, in a small town with 30 local jobs and 30 jobs to which people commute, the ratio of local jobs to total employment is 1 to 2.
REFORM:	A concept of change involving the modification or elimination of elements of a situation of system considered highly undesirable. Thus, a reform platform for a politician is often associated with eliminating corruption and increasing public participation in decision making.
REGRESSIVE TAX:	A tax which falls more heavily on people with low incomes than on those with higher incomes. Some taxes on foods, for example, tend to be regressive since the amount of food purchased is not a function of household income but rather of family size and age. Since poor families tend to be larger than other families, the poor, in effect, pay more taxes related to food.
ROUTINE DECISION:	A decision for which there is established procedure and which does not need any special attention or new information on a continuing basis. Thus, many small towns have routine decisions regarding "regular" governmental functions, such as when to repave the streets or where to locate streetlights. It is also often useful to periodically question whether routine decisions should be as regular and automatic as they are, and whether more non-routine functions should be included in the local government.
RULING CLIQUE:	A small group which controls community decision making with formal and/or informal authority. The notion of a clique suggests a small group of like-minded people who join together for a specific purpose of gaining leverage in a community to make decisions.
SANCTIONS:	Rewards which are promised for compliance or punishments promised for non-compliance to given guidelines, commands, or expectations. Thus. breaking a law warrants the negative sanctions of fines or jail, while performing well in one's job may bring bonuses and pay raises.

SELF INTEREST:	Concern and support for those things that directly affect a person whether positively or negatively. Self interest is not necessarily selfish interest in that it can be shared by many people and be a positive force in decision making that will benefit everyone. Yet, the adding up of all self interest in the community may well not total to the greatest degree of public interest.
STATUS:	A position based upon prestige and lifestyle and accorded to individuals and groups in the community or other social settings. Status can come from wealth, income, or occupation, but may also be the result of family background, the use of power, admired talent or friendship with others of high status.
STRATIFICATION:	A system whereby those of different status are spread out along a continuum of high status to low status based upon recognizable "strata" into which different people fall. Many social scientists believe that there is a stratificaion system in all communities, at least to some extent, and the expression "We're just plain folks here" really isn't true beneath the surface.
STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT:	The long-term unemployment of a sector of the local population due to an insufficiently flexible supply or use of the area's potentially productive resources. It may be that capital and material resources are not being used to their highest, most profitable efficiency and thus businesses leave many employable workers unable to find a job. Or, workers may remain unemployed either because they are not trained to work in other industries nearby or because they are unable and unwilling to move to another location. In any event, it is the basic structure of the community and the setting which has caused unemployment. This differs from short-term unemployment (for example, irregular plant layoffs or closings where workers are quickly rehired elsewhere), or cyclical unemployment by periodically inadequate demand for workers, such as is the case with the seasonal demand or lack of demand for farm help.
SUBJECTIVE:	Based on thought and/or feelings of individuals. Opinions, beliefs, attitudes, values are examples of subjective expressions.

SUBSIDIARY COMPANY:	A company controlled by another company such that the controlling company owns 50% or more of the shares of the subsidiary company or through some other mechanism directs and controls the subsidiary. Many once-independent industries in small towns have been purchased in the past decades through larger corporations and are now operated as subsidiaries. This arrangement is said to create external linkages between the community and the world beyond it in that the major decisions in the economic sphere are then made by individuals and groups, such as corporate executives, outside the community.
SUBSIDIES:	Financial help or other support given by the government or another group for a service which is unprofitable, yet considered important to the public interest. One aim of subsidies is to encourage some public actions by making them more attractive, such as mass transit through lower fares, or certain land-use patterns through subsidies to farmers either to plant or not to plant certain crops.
TERRITORIALITY:	The tendency of a person or group to mark out a physical life space area to defend that area against intrusion by others. People usually develop strong allegiances to specific territories which may be entire communities or specific neighborhoods within them.
TRADEOFF:	An exchange which involves the sacrifice (usually voluntary) of one objective to gain another. Negotiation and settlement of controversy through a democratic process often involves tradeoffs which attempt to spread dissatisfaction as fairly as possible among all involved.
TYPOLOGY:	A classification or labeling system containing two or more types based on the characteristics of the things being classified. Typologies are used in organizing data which would otherwise be too bulky. Thus, the 100 communities in a given county can be broken out by such "either-or" categories as population sizes. The most useful typologies are those that are both exhaustive in the sense that all items being classified should be able to be placed in one type or another, and also mutually exclusive in that any given item should fit in one and only one classification type.

VALUE:	A type of belief expressing the degree of worth and importance in an area of behavior and existence deemed important by a person or group of persons. Values can be abstract ideals, such as search for truth and beauty, or much more specific preferences, such as between security and risk taking. A value system involves an ordering of values in terms of their importance and specifies the inter-relationships between values.
VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATION:	Those organizations which people willingly join and in which they are involved without pay or formal remuneration. Some are institutionalized, such as the Rotary Club or PTA and others are ad-hoc groups formed around specific issues which come and go.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Bert E. Swanson is professor of political science, University of Florida, and Director of Research for the Community Renewal Center of The Institute on Man and Science. Bert received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Oregon and has taught at Hunter and Sarah Lawrence Colleges. He is the author of Concern for Community in Urban America (1971); co-author of The Rulers and the Ruled, which won a Woodrow Wilson Award as the best book on government published in 1964.

At The Institute, Bert has lead research efforts in community renewal projects in Stump Creek, Whitsett, Black Lick, and Dunbar. He is also a presentor at Institute forums, working, for example, with Isaac Asimov.

Richard A. Cohen is Senior Policy Planner at The Institute on Man and Science. Rick received his Masters Degree in City Planning from the University of Pennsylvania, where he was awarded the second annual Charles Abrams Scholarship of the American Institute of Planners. While at Penn, he edited the journal Planning Comment for two years. Prior to joining The Institute on Man and Science, Rick worked as a legislative consultant to a U.S. Senator, directed research for a project sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and conducted neighborhood studies for a community action program in Boston.

Rick has served in a senior staff role in a number of Institute programs, including field work in the Dunbar Project, program design and writing for the Whitsett Project, and a new Neighborhood Preservation Support System for Pennsylvania. He has also participated in technology assessment, social impact analysis, environmental impact statement preparation, and highway planning studies sponsored by The Institute.